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THE WORLD TRIUMVIRATE

ONCE again, when the accumulated difficulties and indecisions were piled high enough to satisfy the gloomiest pessimist, the heads of the Great Powers have met and made sensible compromises and decisions on immediate problems. Yalta is an improvement on Teheran. The public had then to be content with an assurance that agreement was reached; since no details of settlement were published, those "in the know" have ever since been quarrelling in whispers, occasionally audible to the public, about just what was decided about the future of Poland, "spheres of interest" and other post-war problems. On this occasion, apart from an understanding about Germany, we have a statesmanlike decision about Poland, useful recommendations on Yugoslavia, agreement on one of the most thorny problems unresolved at Dumbarton Oaks, the date fixed for a further conference at San Francisco, and a promise of regular meetings of the Foreign Ministers to deal with troublesome issues as they arise.

No doubt there were also unpublished decisions. If they concerned Japan and the Far East, publicity would have been premature. It was an advance to have the Curzon Line agreed upon by the United States, while the dubious question of Germany's Eastern frontiers is held over for decision at the future Peace Conference, when smaller Powers will presumably be represented and the relevant facts should be more clear. When the Security issue is discussed at San Francisco in April, France and China will be present, and the new voting formula will be on the agenda. This all seems to be sensible. At the moment the broad decisions must be made by the Big Three, since they alone have the power; but, when it comes to creating a World Organisation, the lesser Powers must have a chance of fully expressing their views.

All the Big Three have agreed in the past on the principles of the Atlantic Charter, even though national reservations have whittled the document down to a few platitudes. The Charter is now again evoked in dealing with liberated Europe. We may summarise the principle underlying the declarations by saying that the Western Democracies accept the facts about Eastern Europe, and recognise that exiled Governments, which are out of touch with peoples liberated by the Red Army, cannot again rule in those countries, while Stalin has agreed that it is undesirable that their place should be taken by unrepresentative bodies, whether or not they are dominated by Communists. Let us admit that the conditions of formal democracy do not exist in ravaged countries like Poland and Yugoslavia. The problem is only soluble when the principle is laid down that collaborators are for the time being excluded from the right to share in the choice of provisional Governments, that interim Resistance administrations shall be made more representative by the inclusion of members from as many anti-Fascist parties as possible, and that the whole apparatus of democratic safeguards shall function as soon as economic and social conditions permit.

It is at this point that we find ourselves disappointed with the Yalta decisions. There is still too much emphasis on the balance of parties and on strategic frontiers. Both these political issues depend for their solution on economic factors about which little is said in the Crimea Report. Hunger and devastation are the overwhelming facts about Europe to-day. The story of starvation in Holland (a new and appalling case which results from the flooding and German looting) is parallel with the conditions in the countryside of Yugoslavia, Greece and Italy. There are many causes, the most important of which was the premature decision to pile up resources in the Far East and the consequent waste of an enormous quantity of American loaded shipping, now anchored to Pacific atolls. Food is only the most urgent half of the story. The reconstruction of Europe's industries and their re-equipment with machinery; the need for seeds, fertilisers and agricultural machinery if the land is again to feed the peoples; above all, the overriding need of transport everywhere—these are the great basic requirements which underlie all others. Whether violence is to continue throughout Europe, whether frontiers are to be settled by agreement or by force, whether men and women are to live stultified lives behind narrow frontiers, or are to breathe more freely in larger unions with their neighbours depends on the Big Three's capacity to put welfare before politics. That they have resolved not to quarrel, but to reach sensible compromises on political difficulties, is the great and reassuring news that comes from Yalta. What Europe awaits is assurance that they can also agree on a plan of European economic reconstruction from the North Cape down to the Volga.

The "Common Enemy"

The passages in the Yalta statement dealing with Germany naturally reflect the standpoint of Allies confident of their ability soon to impose their will by armed force. With Silesia lost, and the Red Army advancing towards Cottbus and (heavily bombed) Dresden in a great outflanking movement south of Berlin, the decisive defeat of the German Army on the Eastern front cannot be many months delayed; if Field Marshal Montgomery's current operations breach the defences of the Ruhr, the end of organised military resistance will be in sight. To the Big Three it may well have seemed that the need to "soften" Germany by assurances had lapsed. There is, indeed, an affirmation in general terms that "it is not our purpose to destroy the people of Germany"; but the terms which the Allies have agreed to impose will not be disclosed until final victory has been secured. All that the world is now told is that all German armed forces will be disbanded, that all war criminals will be punished and the Nazi regime extirpated, that reparations—assessed by a Commission in Moscow—will be exacted in kind, and that (apart from "other measures . . . necessary to the future peace and safety of the world") all German industry capable of use for military production will be *eliminated or controlled*. Dr. Goebbels, of course, declares that this means de-industrialisation of Germany on Morgenthau lines. But it may (more reasonably) mean that, if only in order to provide reparations in kind over a long period, Germany must retain enough industrial equipment to provide employment for most of her factory workers. To these questions there is no answer. Nothing is said for or against De Gaulle's claim to annex instead

of merely occupying the Rhineland, nor are the difficult problems of transfer of populations touched upon. An area denuded of Germans presents quite different problems from one, like the Rhineland, in which the factories and mines must be worked by Germans. Nor is it plain whether agreement to establish a Central Control Commission in Berlin excludes the possibility that the three or (with France) four Occupying Powers may sponsor very different systems of German administration in their respective Zones. Naturally, the German propaganda machine is now working overtime to persuade the German people that this is a sentence of death; but there are limits to human endurance. With refluent waves of millions of refugees meeting in Central Germany as the final target for Allied carpet-bombing, the point must soon be reached when the unknown (however black it be painted by Goebbels) will be less terrifying than actuality.

The New Poland

Perhaps the best work the Big Three did at Yalta, in so far as they have published their decisions, lies in their proposals for a Polish settlement. With skill and ingenuity they have "turned," as a soldier might put it, the awkward issue of recognition. They do not "recognise" the Lublin Government as it stands, for plainly it is not in its present shape representative of the Polish people. Silently and by implication, for the same reason, they withdraw recognition from the London Poles. The new Government which is to be formed and recognised will be drawn both from the Lublin team and from "Poles abroad," with, it may be, others who are now in the Western areas of liberated Poland. The delicate task of bringing these three groups together is assigned jointly to Mr. Molotov and the British and American Ambassadors in Moscow. This seems the right solution, and we shall expect with some confidence that Mr. Mikolajczyk and his saner colleagues will collaborate whole-heartedly to make it a success. The unreasoning attitude of "no compromise with Partition," brusquely adopted by the Arciszewski Cabinet in London, should convince the Peasant Party leader that his place is in Warsaw. The promise of future free elections is as clear as we could wish: no democratic party will be debarred from putting up its candidates. In defining the eastern frontier of Poland the Russians have had their way: it will follow the Curzon Line with minor rectifications; but the decision to refer the drawing of the western frontier to the Peace Conference means, we take it, that a solution less extreme than the line of the Oder is still a possibility.

Belgium's New Government

The Pierlot Government fell as much because its chiefs were emigrés as because they lacked the necessary energy to lift Belgium out of its alarming economic plight. Mr. van Acker, the new Socialist Premier, is a Fleming, and was in his early life a docker. He was active in the resistance movement during the German Occupation, and distinguished himself under M. Pierlot by the rapid passage of a bold Social Security Act. The manœuvres with which he has had to contend in forming his Cabinet suggest that Belgian politics have not yet crystallised into their post-war pattern. At the start the Catholics refused to serve in any Ministry which included Communists, while the Socialists refused to serve without them. This meant not that the rivals of the Left are linked in close affection, but rather that the Socialists insist that the Communists shall carry their full load of responsibility. It then seemed likely that the Catholics would split, and that their Left wing, the Democratic Catholics, would join Mr. van Acker's Ministry. To preserve its unity the Party finally revised its attitude and joined a Cabinet which is composed of six Catholics, five Socialists, four Liberals and two Communists. The Premier will himself tackle the difficult question of coal. But no Belgian Government, however vigorous, can solve the food problem until we help it by pouring in supplies. Even if this means that we shall have to tighten our own belts, it ought to be done without delay, and not for Belgium alone.

How Many Houses?

Our contemporary, the *Economist*, persists in attacking the Government's housing plans on the score not of their inadequacy, but of their excess. According to the *Economist*, though the need for houses will be urgent for a few years after the war, it will then fall away steeply owing to the decline in population, and a building industry of a million and a quarter, able to build about 400,000 houses a year in addition to other construction, will then be altogether too big. Our contemporary is also concerned at the prospect of a large housing programme absorbing much too high a proportion of the national savings and getting in the way of other needed forms of capital development. These views appear to us to be wholly wrong. We agree with the *Economist* that there is not likely to be after the war any large revival of the demand for unsubsidised houses bought through Building Societies on the instalment plan, and that most houses will have to be built by public authorities for letting and with the aid of some sort of subsidy. But the size of the required subsidy will depend mainly on the success with which the Government promotes standardisation of components and prevents profiteering either in builders' materials or in the cost of the sites. As for the supply of capital, a high rate of accumulation will clearly be needed for some time after the war; but the introduction of a full employment policy will make this relatively easy to bring about. Finally, as to the need for houses, a decline in population need not mean a decline in the number of families, and we are unable to see why 400,000 a year is regarded as too high a long-run target. There are at least 4,000,000 houses that are already 90 or more years old, and plenty more well past middle age. By the time we have replaced these, there will be no dearth of further jobs needing to be done.

The Grid in Wartime

Yet another factual black-out has been lifted by the publication of the report of the Central Electricity Board for the years 1940-1943. Everyone knows that the strain on the grid under war conditions has been very severe, and that matters have been made more difficult by the necessity of using inferior grades of coal, including large quantities produced from open-cast workings. This has meant that a much larger proportion of plant has been at all times temporarily out of use for repair or reconditioning—from 13 to 18 per cent., as against an average of six per cent. before the war. Changes in the location of industry involved difficult problems for the Board in 1940 and 1941, and it is surprising that no more than £6,000,000 has been spent on wartime capital development. As for renewals, plant has been kept working long after it was due to be replaced, and has stood up remarkably well to the strain. Equipment policy, of course, depended on the estimated length of the war as well as on the comparative urgency of rival demands. In general, the Board was told that it would have to manage without, and only in 1944 was it even allowed to get ahead with planning and placing orders on the understanding that no work could be actually started until the European war was over. Several years must therefore elapse before the grid is re-equipped for its post-war tasks; but this is no fault of the Central Electricity Board, which has stood up very well to a difficult job, and has provided an admirable object lesson in the advantages of the new type of public corporation for the management of socialised services.

Sir John Pays Up

For once the Treasury has paid up handsomely. The doubling of the University Grant was badly needed, but it was not anticipated that the recommendations of the University Grants Committee would be so completely accepted. One of the most interesting points in Sir John Anderson's statement was the promise that further sums than the two millions a year now granted would be made available as the requirements of the universities increased. At present salaries and maintenance could absorb almost all the increase; after the war better research facilities might involve an expenditure at least as large again. Building being virtually prohibited for the next two years, only a token grant of £250,000 has been made. Here, also, the Treasury has accepted responsibility for a "very substantial proportion" of the thirty millions which capital developments to universities and medical schools will require over the next ten years. Medical schools and teaching hospitals are clearly to be the favourite child of higher education, for special provision is made for them of one and a half millions a year. Now that the financial anxieties of the universities have to some extent been allayed, they should not further delay long overdue salary and wage increases. Will the Government—whose generosity is prompted by the belief that a little money spent on universities will bring a big return—be as liberal in its scheme for ex-Service students?

PARLIAMENT: England, Their England

Wednesday, noon.

Much of the outside pressure against the Requisitioned Land and War Works Bill had come from highly reputable bodies concerned with safeguarding public amenities and common land. After Anderson's speech introducing the Bill, most of this kind of opposition began (to use Eden's anti-E.A.M. metaphor) to "flake away," leaving the usual hard core of hard-faced, property-owning fuglemen of freedom in possession of the debate. Forests of Tories shot up as each speech ended; the Labour benches were noticeably empty, and of the twenty-nine speeches in the extended debate only three were by Labour Members, one of whom, Moelwyn Hughes, welcomed the Bill as achieving "the magnificent objective of bringing more of the land of this country under the control of the people of this country"; while another, Key, welcoming the Bill more guardedly, deplored the fact that the proposed Commission would owe "no allegiance whatever to the Minister of Town and Country Planning."

The Chancellor's speech was ingenious and disarming. He admitted that, even in his opinion, the Bill was not without blemish. He gave almost fulsome assurances of the safeguards that would be introduced in Committee stage, including specific references to amenities and agriculture and the dropping of a whole sub-section objected to by an amenities body. So it was no wonder that the poor Tories complained that the Bill as presented by him bore little relation to the Bill as printed and in their hands; and promised to fight it later—unmoved, apparently, by the Attorney-General's telling instances of prosperous factories on which hundreds of thousands of pounds of public money had been spent, to whose present siting there was no planning objection, and which could not possibly be made to present to the original landowners.

At question-time a long and important statement by Dick Law on food supplies for liberated Europe evoked a general demand, voiced by Pethick-Lawrence and Wintertoh, for a full debate, time for which was accordingly promised.

When Lindsay asked about "international agreements on problems of trade, commodities and full employment," and Attlee replied simply, "These matters are being carefully explored," there was a loud and cynical roar of laughter, to which even Attlee contributed a wry smile. When Gallacher asked if the settlement in Athens meant that the Government's slanders against E.A.M.. would be withdrawn, the Tories gladly and glibly chorused "Ask Citrine!" Frank Bowles coined a new courtesy by referring to Herbert Morrison (à propos of the incomplete lifting of the black-out) as "my right honourable friend the Prince of Darkness."

One cold and drizzling morning Miss Rathbone asked the Minister of Health "to spread knowledge among the general public of the benefits of sleeping in the open air"; he replied, "I do not think that the present circumstances are propitious."

PONTIFEX MINOR

WORLD TRADE UNIONISM

To-day, as in 1918, the World Trade Union movement is being reconstructed. But, as compared with a generation ago, the balance of forces has radically changed. Then it was a question simply of rebuilding the International Federation of Trade Unions—never representative of much more than the workers of Western Europe and the American Federation of Labour. The present conference in London has a larger perspective. The ghost of the I.F.T.U.—attenuated by the A.F. of L's refusal to sit in the company either of the Russians or its own rival, the Congress of Industrial Organisations—was, indeed, in attendance; but the centre of gravity of this gathering was altered by the inclusion of delegates from the U.S.S.R., from the Confederation of Latin American Workers, and from India and the British Colonies, as well as by the invitation to Italy, Rumania, Bulgaria and Finland which was extended by the Conference against the pleas of Sir Walter Citrine. International Trade Unionism has become for the first time potentially a world-wide movement.

Generally speaking, the Trade Unionists who have been active in the I.F.T.U. are men who have grown thoroughly accustomed to collective bargaining, "recognition" of their Unions by the employers' associations, dealing with the State on the assumption that the State regards Trade Unionism as an indispensable element in the working of the capitalist machine. In their day-to-day thinking, if not in their off-duty moments of idealism, they take the capitalist system for granted; and they find it difficult to put themselves in the place of Trade Union leaders whose experience has been poles apart from theirs. The leaders of the A.F. of L. are not really alone in doubting whether there can be any *bona fide* Trade Unions where there are no employers for them to bargain with; and West European Trade Unionists are hardly less bewildered when they come face to face with the realities of Trade Unionism in, say, Greece.

Where differences as wide as those between the Soviet Trade Unions, the British, the Americans, the Latin Americans, the East Europeans, and the Colonials exist, it cannot be easy to constitute an International standing for a coherent or definite policy. Assuredly this cannot be done by pretending that all the other movements are trying to be as like the old West European movements as they can, and asking them to fit into a West European pattern. Even if we leave aside for the moment the Soviet Trade Unions, it is simply not the case that the common aspiration of the rest is to promote a form of capitalist society into which they can fit neatly on the British-Dutch-Scandinavian model; nor can a movement run on the basis of such notions hope to play any effective part in the reconstruction of Europe or in the development of working-class power outside Europe.

One of the difficulties of the International Labour Organisation is that its operations have been based largely on this idea; and the question is coming up as a matter of primary importance in relation to its future. It is not only that the Soviet Union cannot be made to fit into the picture of an essentially tripartite organisation: it is also that the tripartite pattern, as interpreted in Great Britain and a few other countries, means something essentially different from what it means elsewhere. The British T.U.C. thinks of it as meaning that the employers and the Trade Unions see how far they can agree, and then go to the Government to back their joint views, appealing to the Government to take sides only when their negotiations break down. But such a conception would appear fantastic to the delegates from Eastern and Southern Europe, the Colonies or Latin America, and probably hardly less so to the C.I.O. and the French.

Of course, underlying these differences of experience and also overlaying them are differences of attitude. The C.I.O. is not Socialist, and neither has nor professes to have the desire to supersede private enterprise by State-run industry. But the C.I.O. is, industrially, much to the Left of the British T.U.C., because it is still fighting a hard battle for recognition and looks to the State, as long as Roosevelt is in office, to give it some backing against an employing class much more militant than the British. The West European leaders mostly are Socialists, at least in theory; but they keep their Socialist theory and their industrial practice mainly in watertight compartments, and have assuredly no notion of trying to establish Socialism in their own countries by revolutionary means. On the other hand, the Trade Union movements of Eastern and Southern Europe, and most of those in Latin America and elsewhere outside Europe, are much nearer to the revolutionary tradition: they contain a good many Syndicalists or near-Syndicalists, as well as Communists of a variety of brands.

The real question, therefore, is whether Trade Unionism is to reappear on the scene as a revolutionary or an accommodating influence. If the British T.U.C. is in a difficulty because it wants to keep in with the Soviet Trade Unions without giving up any of its own habits of rubbing along with capitalism (and also without parting company with either the A.F. of L. or the I.F.T.U.), the Soviet leaders are in hardly less of a difficulty because, though they have a natural sympathy with non-reformist movements, they do not want to quarrel with the British T.U.C.

One reason why Sir Walter Citrine and the T.U.C. wanted the World Trade Union Conference to be purely deliberative was that they feared any attempt to take decisions, at any rate about Trade Union matters, might lead to a line-up that would be both disastrous and unrealistic, since it would not give any group what it wanted. On the other hand, the T.U.C. hoped that it might be practicable to reach a common point of view about certain vitally important non-Trade Union issues, such as the treatment of Germany, and particularly of German Labour, and the handling of some of the immediate problems of economic reconstruction and colonial economic policy. It was, however, made clear, in the course of the first few days' deliberations, that a good many delegates would not be content if the Conference dispersed after merely passing some resolutions without creating machinery to see them carried out. As we write, the Conference seems likely to agree on a compromise whereby a "continuation" committee will be charged with drawing up, for consideration and ratification, the constitution for a world organisation into which the I.F.T.U. may merge as gracefully as possible. Whether the A.F. of L. will be prepared to adhere is an open question; much will depend on the attitude of its constituent unions when the organisation becomes a fact. Some leaders of the British T.U.C. are inclined to follow Sir Walter Citrine in disliking commitments until their full extent is precisely formulated.

The division of attitude in World Trade Unionism is, of course, a symptom of the uncertainty of the world outlook as a whole. Trade Unionism can adapt itself to almost any environment, except those of Fascism and of purely primitive agricultural life; but, having adapted itself quite differently in Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States, it cannot easily join up to provide a common pattern for the resurgent Trade Unionism of the countries whose movements have been submerged, or are only now struggling into existence for the first time. Nor, on the plane of world policy, can it escape its share in the confusion of national interests and conflicting ideologies. Delays in the establishment of a World Organisation would be deplorable, but it is probably wiser not to force the pace unduly. It is the reality of unity that counts.

THE GREEK SETTLEMENT

The armed struggle in Greece has been ended, after long and difficult negotiations, by a formal treaty which restores in law and on paper the political unity of this unlucky country. Behind this achievement—for which full credit is due to all parties, ranging from Mr. MacMillan and the Regent to M. Siantos, the Greek Communist leader—there still lie problems so complex that only with rare generosity and wisdom can we hope to solve them. The smashing of railways and bridges has isolated the mountainous interior from the ports. Always dependent on imported food, the population, ragged and unshod, faces semi-starvation after years of privation. Scores of villages lie in ruins, where German reprisals took vengeance for acts of resistance. Without credit or raw materials, industry stands still and an immense proportion of the urban workers are unemployed. The currency has broken down in a fantastic inflation, so that prices, wages, banking and the national revenue are in chaos. These are the material problems. Worse still is the legacy of bitterness which the recent conflict, reviving hatreds that date from long before the Metaxas dictatorship, has left behind.

Two first-hand investigators have now reported on the events of December. Sir Walter Citrine stresses the fact, which we do not doubt, that E.L.A.S. has been guilty of excesses and murders and that it treated some hostages ill. About the charges brought by British eye-witnesses against the other side he said nothing. Four centuries of Turkish oppression left their mark on all the peoples of the Balkans, who have never conducted their wars according to the rules of Geneva. Least of all was this to be expected after German terrorism had obliterated all respect for the sacredness of human life. For the rest, Sir Walter insisted that our troops, in common with other regular armies, have the regular soldier's dislike for the methods of guerrilla warfare. In all this there was little to illuminate the past or to guide us for the future.

Mr. Gerald Barry's articles in the *News Chronicle* are the work of a mind trained to study history in the making and from them much can be learned about the state of mind on both sides which produced this conflict. From last autumn onwards, E.A.M. "genuinely feared a *coup d'état* by the Right" and it could give reasons for its fears. It was widely known "that King George had at one time received the secret support of both Mr. Churchill and Mr. Roosevelt." The Greek general staff was hostile and "hobnobbed with the German-controlled Security Battalions." British support, withdrawn from E.A.M. last spring, was still given to the rival partisans of the Right. The decisive fact, as we have always protested, was that when E.L.A.S. withdrew its own forces from Athens, after the liberation of the capital, the royalist Mountain Brigade was called into action. Then British insistence forbade M. Papandreou to disarm it and smashed the compromise to which he had assented. The result was that E.A.M. believed that it had been "double-crossed," and refused to disarm while its opponents retained their arms. But even after the shooting had begun, E.A.M. was still ready to join a new administration under the Liberal veteran, Sofoulis. Mr. Barry quotes M. Papandreou, no friend of E.A.M., to the effect that its appeal to force in December was "a last-minute decision"—in other words, it was not until it believed itself to have been double-crossed that it aimed at a revolutionary stroke. Mr. Churchill's assumption that E.A.M. must be treated as a military enemy dates from his telegram to General Scobie last August.

How are we to interpret the struggle for power

which has now ended, thanks to British intervention, in the surrender of E.A.M. on terms? This cleavage that split a nation has, as we see it, three aspects. First there is an acute class-struggle that dates from 1936. A general election had resulted in an even division of votes between the Liberal Left and the Monarchist Right, with a small group of Communist deputies holding the balance. Rather than allow these "Bolsheviks" any influence, King George tore up the Constitution and installed the Metaxas dictatorship. This dread of Communism persists and the propertied classes still look to this unpopular king for salvation. Secondly, there is a cleavage, which does not closely follow class lines. On one side is the younger generation, which revived the old guerrilla tradition and fought the Germans from the mountains, as its grandfathers had fought the Turks. On the other are, first of all, the decided Fascists and collaborationists, who formed a Quisling Administration and raised the Security Battalions which the Germans armed. More numerous than these are the average unheroic citizens, who were neither Fascists nor pro-Germans, but preferred a quiet life to the risks and terrors of resistance.

Such cleavages have their parallels everywhere, even in France. But in Greece there is a third complication. Always in the Balkans parties in their domestic struggles have looked to some patron Great Power. Even in the last century, Greece had its British, French and Russian parties. Given this traditional habit of thought, it may have been inevitable that the class structure should be sensitive to Moscow and London, as its opposed magnetic poles. Mr. Barry tells us that in Greece the belief in an inevitable struggle between Russia and the West is general, thanks to Nazi propaganda. Mr. Bevin's disclosure to the Labour Party Conference that strategical reasons compelled us to intervene, may have confirmed the conclusion at which Greeks had already arrived. Here is the worst of the consequences that can result from the division of Europe into spheres of influence. The activist younger generation looks across the lines of demarcation to Russia for inspiration, while Britain seems to stand only for a propertied minority and the inert dread of creative change. The ugliest part of the story, as Mr. Barry tells it, is that even life-long Republicans, including men who have held high office, are making up their minds to vote for the King in the coming plebiscite, because they believe that this may be the only way to secure from the British Government the help Greece needs so sorely.

General Plastiras, in the agreement with E.A.M., has guaranteed freedom of opinion, assembly and Trade Union organisation, and has promised to end martial law, to take no reprisals on E.L.A.S. for "political" crimes, to recruit a National Army (in which the appropriate age-groups of E.L.A.S. will be enrolled) to "purge" the Civil Service, the Gendarmerie and the police, and to hold a plebiscite on the constitutional question, followed by free elections, under Allied supervision.

These are fair promises. It has already been announced that martial law has been raised; and some members of E.L.A.S. who had been condemned by courts martial for "rebellion" have been pardoned. After the signature of the pact, M. Siantos was allowed for the first time to state the E.A.M. case to foreign correspondents. Taken together, these events suggest a welcome relaxation of Government repression; but the basic condition for the reconstruction of Greek democracy is for the Allies now to see that food and other economic aid are provided with an impartial hand to all who need them. Mr. Churchill's dramatic second advent in Athens and his speech, hailing Greece's "bright future" encourage us to hope that in the case of Greece the Yalta Declaration may be interpreted as meaning that "liberated" Greece will be given every material aid in securing its own political freedom.

THE FUTURE OF BROADCASTING

ASKED in the House of Commons this month if the Government had yet considered what action should be taken with regard to the B.B.C. Charter, due for renewal or revision in 1946, Mr. Attlee replied that the matter was "under examination." Questioned whether it was intended to have the Charter reviewed by a Parliamentary Committee or public commission, he gave a non-committal answer that implied that there were problems more pressing than the future of broadcasting. This may be so; but it is by no means too soon for public discussion of the cardinal question on which the whole post-war development of broadcasting turns: are we to have (as at present) monopoly financed by tax, or competition financed (with or without advertising revenue) by commercial interests?

Monopoly is an ugly word and may easily stand for an ugly abuse of power when its holders control the most potent of all weapons for influencing public opinion. It may also lead, in so far as radio is a vehicle for entertainment, to unimaginative dullness. The advocates of commercial broadcasting base their case partly on the contention that radio programmes must *interest* their audience, that monopoly has no incentive to please listeners, and that variety and vigour of treatment will be secured only under the spur of competition; and partly on the argument that, even if positive abuses of the power of a State monopoly can be restrained by Parliamentary criticism, the ability of a monopoly to kill by suppression is intolerable.

A democratic society would not tolerate a single State-controlled *British Gazette* in place of a free press: why should it be content with a single B.B.C.? The superiority of American radio entertainment is adduced—with little enough supporting evidence—in favour of commercial broadcasting; and, to meet the objections of "the little clique of intellectuals" who dislike Scarlatti mixed with Spirella, a scheme has been canvassed whereby commercial competition could be secured with little or no need for revenue from advertising. The State, it is suggested, might continue to run the B.B.C., but should license, say, two commercial networks. The B.B.C. and its competitors would each be allotted one-fourth of the revenue accruing from listeners' P.O. licences. The remaining quarter of the licence revenue would be allocated to the concern receiving most "preferences" recorded by listeners when renewing their licences. Whatever be the merits of this scheme, there is a real possibility that public opinion may be swung in favour of some system of competitive commercial broadcasting. This is indicated by the fact that in 1943 a Gallup Poll showed a 40% vote for "American plan" radio.

The whole case for continuance of broadcasting in this country on a non-commercial basis is argued in an admirable pamphlet* published by the Arts Advisory Committee of the Communist Party. The pamphlet is a fresh example of the Party's present attitude of objectivity and constructive criticism. The authors point out that, however much money they had to burn, commercial radio *entrepreneurs* could not make talent flourish where it does not already exist; that it is pure delusion to imagine that on a commercial basis greater freedom of speech or braver treatment of controversial issues would be obtained; and that the objective of capitalistic radio would be subtly to sap popular demand for social changes by anaesthetising listeners with escapist entertainment and soothing syrup commentaries. It is, in our judgment, axiomatic that Big Business must not be allowed to control a channel of communication which differs from a newspaper in that its potential audience is nation-wide, its appeal (carried by the emotional content of the human voice) extremely pervasive, and its speed—e.g., in disseminating news in a political crisis—peculiarly important and dangerous. And, that being so, we should view with the gravest concern any proposal to depart from the principle that broadcasting must be a State monopoly. Whether separate commercial stations were licensed, or "time on the air" over a B.B.C. network sold to independent groups (as was done before the war in Holland), the power of the purse to buy talent would inevitably give Wealth its own monopoly-control of audiences who switched off the B.B.C. What progressive group running a transmitter could compete in entertainment appeal with a Big Business "star" programme?

Does it follow, then, that the B.B.C. Charter should be renewed without revision, and that no changes are called for in the administration of Broadcasting House and in its relations with the public? In the end it is probable that the cultural influence and popularity of the B.B.C. will always be conditioned predominantly by the personality of its Director General. For long years the B.B.C. bore, for both good and ill, the indelible impress of Lord Reith: it is too soon yet to judge what Mr. Haley is likely to make of it. The Communist Party pamphlet already quoted is critical of the absence, at present, of effective Parliamentary control: the Charter is a Royal Charter; and, sheltered behind it, the Governors (appointed not by Parliament but by the Crown) are in a position to defy criticism if they so desire. It seems questionable to us whether it would be wise to go far in encouraging Parliamentary interference with the day-to-day detailed working of the B.B.C.; but the activities of its Governing Board should certainly be more open to public scrutiny, and a Minister of the Crown should be directly answerable for its general policy. Above all, it is eminently desirable that there should be closer contacts between broadcasting controllers and their audience.

Fair-minded critics of the B.B.C. will readily admit that broadcasting in this country has tended always to be run "on the cheap." If the desirable increase in choice of programmes is to be achieved—a development made easier by the new short-wave, limited-radius Frequency Modulation technique—and if there is to be (equally desirable) decentralisation of broadcasting into regional units, the licence-holder must be asked, and can well afford, to pay more. But money is not all. A recent pamphlet† dealing especially with the need for more generously financed regional stations, adequately equipped "to reflect and interpret the life and background of listeners," draws attention to a significant point which has not escaped the notice of the C.P.'s Committee, namely, that Schools broadcasts are good because the programme department concerned has been at pains to consult and pay attention to the constructive criticisms of educationists.

The moral is clear: a nation gets the broadcasting it deserves, in the sense that if it acquiesces in a purely passive relationship between listeners and broadcasters, it will get a B.B.C. in which creative talent is heavily over-laden with a cumbrous administrative machine and the essential link of sympathy between the man behind the microphone and his audience is lost. The worst thing that could happen to the B.B.C. would be for its staff on the higher levels to become an esoteric community remote from the dust of the arena. The composition and functions of Advisory Councils representing different interests of listeners and performers are not easy to work out in practice; but greater contact between B.B.C. and public—both nationally and in regions—is essential if broadcasting is to play its full part in the nation's cultural life.

**The B.B.C.* Communist Party, 16 King Street, W.C.2. Price 9*d*.

†*Broadcasting: A Policy for Future Development in Scotland.* Saltire Society, 483 Lawnmarket, Edinburgh 1.

A LONDON DIARY

WHAT an odd difference, in one respect, between the Crimea Conference and the gatherings of the wise and great with which we became familiar in the Twenties! From Versailles to Genoa, from Rapallo to Washington—wherever the statesmen's circus moved, it was accompanied by a cloud of witnesses from the world's press. Not so at Yalta. There was, of course, the official photographer. He has perpetuated a remembrance of the Big Three in a picture which I shall cherish—Stalin wearing his Marshal's uniform with the correctness of a Guardee; Roosevelt in a velvet-collared cape, his face and pose curiously reminiscent of Forbes Robertson; and Churchill fantastically attired in Volga astrakhan cap, the British warm of a Colonel, and the blue trousers (one guesses) of a naval officer. No single journalist, I gather, was allowed to reach the Crimea. Yet the scene merited good reporting. From a conversation with an eye-witness I gather an impression of staggering contrasts. On the one hand, the pomp of Power Politics, brilliantly stage-managed: the exquisite, silvery aircraft with their fighter escorts sliding down from the sky; the patched-up palaces (museums and sanatoria under Soviet rule) alive with grey-uniformed police, and the black coats of the Kremlin Guards; the Big Three, each with a potentate's retinue; magnificent food—all flown daily from Moscow. And, in the hinterland, nothing but desolation. Sebastopol, an uninhabited ruin, *ausgeschossen*; the countryside, seen from the windows of a car, devastated and largely unpeopled by deportations and (it would appear) some "liquidation" of Tartar collaborators when the Red Army returned. Anyway, an effective reminder to the Big Three that it is against this background of destruction and misery of common people everywhere that the peace must be framed.

* * *

As the World Trade Union Conference got into its stride a subtle change could be felt in the political atmosphere. Every day the T.U.C. was pulled a little nearer to accepting a new international organisation. Delegates from other continents did not want to go back without a definite decision. One of them sarcastically suggested to me that Sir Walter Citrine had become resigned to the success of the discussions. I thought this was rather unfair to the T.U.C. leader; but it did look as if his hard work had produced results which embarrassed him. Though I'm told some sharp words were exchanged in committees and off-stage negotiations, everyone agreed that relations between the Americans, British and Russians were excellent. Nobody expected that all the old differences and loyalties could be swept away merely by speech-making. Lions and lambs do not so easily lie down together. The important thing was to prevent a breakdown once the meetings had begun. It would have been particularly silly if a crisis had developed over the question of the Dublin delegate at a moment when that issue was being settled by the Yalta decisions.

* * *

I think quite a number of the delegates themselves were surprised by the diversity of races, countries and policies which eventually were represented. This is the first time that the trade unions in the British Colonies have come to any international gathering. Some of their leaders—the Indians also—have but recently finished prison sentences for trade union activities. I chatted to some of the West Africans. Although their movements are comparatively young at present, they are looking forward to a big expansion after the war. I hope that our Colonial authorities have learned by now that trade unions and similar organisations are an asset rather than a liability in backward countries which are just entering into a period of rapid development. The Latin Americans, too, have "arrived" in international trade unionism. Lombardo Toledano, who is president of the Confederation of Latin American Workers, made a great impression. I met him just before he made his unanswerable attack on Argentine Fascism. He is a most powerful and self-assured person, and he has had a very remarkable career. Though he is still only fifty, he has been Governor of his native province of Puebla in Mexico, university professor, lawyer, author of a number of books, and trade union leader. I wish all those who think that Argentina is just another military autocracy with which we can go on doing business could have heard the bitter way he described to me the activities of the sordid clique of colonels who are imitating Franco. We shall hear a great deal more of Toledano.

* * *

My Greek friends in this country do not defend the E.L.A.S. killings, but they are frankly astonished at the naïvety of the popular British attitude to them. We do not yet know who many of the victims were. To Greeks who have been trying to defend their country, the identity of the bodies is very relevant. About 300 of them, it is stated, were members of the Metaxas gendarmerie who worked for the Germans during the occupation and who are, therefore, in the eyes of Greek patriots and of official declarations, collaborators of the worst sort. Another 400 are said to have been taken from the Averoff prison which was used for collaborators, while the 114 trade unionists who were murdered came from the quisling Labour Front. Remember that for three years the B.B.C. has told members of the Greek Resistance and of all other Resistance forces throughout Europe to kill collaborators. We have even told them in detail how to kill and how to strip and make use of the clothes and arms of collaborators as well as Germans. E.A.M. learnt the lessons of guerrilla warfare only too well, and they did not abandon them, as they ought to have done, the moment the Allies had reached Greece. Who the numerous other victims of E.L.A.S. were I do not know; no doubt they included many who were innocent. As for hostages, Gerald Barry explains that the K.K.E. motive in taking hostages was that large numbers of their own members were being arrested. I understand that no hostages were taken by E.L.A.S. until December 24, and that in October, when E.A.M. trusted the Papandreou Government, it passed over 1,500 prisoners unhurt. But that E.A.M. had a violent and undisciplined wing which followed only too faithfully the pattern of Balkan and guerrilla warfare, I do not doubt. I am glad that British soldiers are still shocked by such warfare.

* * *

"There are some words on which it is impossible to comment. There are some pronouncements incapable even of being discussed." So writes Ilya Ehrenburg in a review of H. N. Brailsford's book, *Our Settlement with Germany*. I agree. And Mr. Ehrenburg's review, which first appeared in *War and the Working Class*, and which has been reprinted in *Liberté* (Algiers) and many other papers throughout the world, is one of the pronouncements which it is indeed difficult to discuss. That it is a libellous misrepresentation nobody who has read Brailsford's book could for a moment doubt. I did not agree with parts of that book; I found it unrealistic and said so in this journal. But the thesis of Ehrenburg's review is that Brailsford wants to defend the war criminals who have tortured and massacred millions of people in occupied Europe! Ehrenburg's passionate journalism no doubt had its uses during the invasion of Russia, but he seems now aspiring to end the war in the role of Horatio Bottomley. That is to say, while Stalin and Roosevelt and Churchill are considering the problems that arise out of the agony of Europe and the collapse of Germany (and apparently reaching conclusions about the control of German industry which are very similar to those put forward by Brailsford), this slap-dash journalist, abandoning every vestige of scientific Marxism, attempts to exploit the world's miseries and evade the world's problems by throwing the dirtiest of mud at anyone who tries to keep his head and to seek a sane way of preventing the next war.

* * *

The Committee for the Promotion of New Music, which exists under the auspices of the Musicians' Union, has come in for a good deal of publicity, and some mild ridicule. The ridicule seems to me misdirected, since young endeavours should be encouraged. The sessions of the Committee are not concerts in the ordinary sense, but try-outs of new music, followed by a free (and often very critical) discussion of the pieces played. Composers cannot properly judge their own work until they hear it performed any more than journalists know what they think before they've seen what they've said. CRITIC

HARASHÓ

Stalin now has at his command a fair amount of English, particularly slang expressions.

He can—and does occasionally—interrupt his interpreter with "So what?" "What the hell goes on here?" "No, sir." "You've said it."—Report in *Daily Mail*.

Sunny Yalta's Charter,
Written by the Three,
Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin,
Why did they agree?

Down in the Crimea,
All were polyglot.
"Harashó," said Roosevelt.
Stalin said, "So what?"

Did they need at Yalta
An interpreter?
"Nyet, moi dróog," said Churchill.
Stalin said "No sir!"

"Give and take," said Stalin.
"Ládno," said the Three.
"Bet your life," said Stalin,
"All O.K. by me."

Yalta happy landing,
Roosevelt said "Let's go!"
Perfect understanding,
"O.K. Harashó!"

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to F. Welburn.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Local lady has second-hand top denture, one gold tooth at side, very becoming, will fit applicants with small mouth. Suitable for parties, etc.—Advt. in *Cheadle and District Advertiser*.

Mr. Cope also supported Mr. W. Fitzgerald's protest at the introduction into the rules of the word "democratic." It was proposed that the Society should be described as a "non-political democratic body," but Mr. Fitzgerald objected, claiming that democracy meant the rule of the mob, "the persecution of anybody who has the temerity to wear a white collar and has a daily bath." Report of Ratepayers' and Residents' Society meeting in *Epsom and Ewell Herald*.

Be taller. Quickly!! Safely!! Privately!!—Advt. in *Malvern Gazette*.

Mr. J. B. wishes to deny that he attributes his mental and physical abilities to stamps, as stated in this column on Dec. 15. He attributes them to rowing.—Extract from *Philatelic Magazine*.

ON STANDING FOR PARLIAMENT

SALLOW afternoon light filled the empty dance hall. The sparse fringe of joined seats stared in uninviting formality. Bunting was stirred by a draught. I was alone. I could not make up my mind how or where to stand because of the emptiness, the draught, and the faintly comic spotlight of unreality which caught me there in my Service greatcoat, so solemn and expectant in the middle of Saturday afternoon, trying not to listen to the muffle of voices from the room behind the stage.

In there a committee of men and women was deciding whether they would adopt me as Parliamentary Candidate.

I must not stress the suspense—there was not even another candidate waiting with me. Those minutes, nevertheless, spent in the cold, decorated dance hall forced a severely reflective mood upon my solitude. What brought me here in my uniform, in my mid-thirties, to speak nervously from my notes on a postcard and then to wait outside?

I have been a member of the Labour Party, off and on, more or less, cursorily, critically, lightheartedly, or undemonstratively, ever since I became adult. A more exact description would be that I have had progressive sympathies, and among a good many of my friends I have taken such sympathies for granted.

Since the war, however, I have been a good deal in company where the old easy clichés do not go down, where progressive views must sometimes be explained as well as held: but where, nevertheless, a great solidarity of desire for a better way of life relentlessly grows. To have peace, a family, a job and security are desires which are identified with home: but they form an active focus, not a passive dream. That focus of activity in the minds of my comrades convinced me of the need of practical instruments. Experience—this nation has packed twenty years of it into five—has made us objective, a little cynical, less easy to take in. The end of this war will be an affair of politics, whether we like it or not. Are we all going to stand aside and see who wins?

Wearing the King's uniform has meant standing aside for most people; but long before that practical people and men of ideas, business men and intellectuals, were standing aside in self-assured impotence viewing an ageing Parliament and cheering on a Government which we no doubt deserved. Many were not satisfied and said so. Many have said these men were too old, too out of touch, the Tories too self-interested, the Labour men too self-satisfied, the Liberals self-sundered.

Surely now all that is left for us who have stood aside—and for those many experienced fighting men who have never had a vote—is to use what instruments there are at hand and to change these things. That is why we must try to see this vital affair of politics in black and white, not in a blur and smudge of grey compromise, equivocation, abstraction and wish-fulfilment. We know what we want. In my view the best instrument to get it is Labour, the expression of the unpropertied, unprivileged, working, fighting people.

So I said I would have a go at it, and immediately advisers of all kinds stood at my elbow. They said the Labour Party would not have me because it is tied to giving all the seats to elderly meritorious Trade Unionists. They offered, nevertheless, to introduce me to this one or that one who might help. This I refused, and wrote to the Party, formally, with "Dear Sir." I had an answer by return. You didn't have to be fifty, meritorious, a Trade Union official.

Next I was advised that the Service and my civilian employers might prove tough. The Service regulations I found clear enough, followed them and got prompt permission together with much not ill-natured chaff. My employers, quite reasonably, said I would be sacked if I got in. "Can't have a lot of M.P.s on the staff. . . ." Well, I don't blame them, but notice in passing that this game is not going to be all roses.

That, then, brings me reflectively to the decorated dance hall once more and to the door which opened beside the stage. "Hope you haven't caught cold: but there, it's all for the good of the cause. . . ."

The chairman, nervous because he had never chaired an executive meeting before, clasped my hand, which was trembling because I knew I had been adopted. Nervously I stood up and thanked them, said I would do my best, and wondered where one began. I was left in no doubt by the discussion which followed in which it was urged that the Candidate should make himself known to every branch in the constituency.

Afterwards I panicked. Did I know enough about Labour politics to appear in public? I resolved to read and to ask. I read Strachey's book, which is a lucid refresher; Bevan's book, which is a substantial cocktail. Then I took to the Labour Party pamphlets and slowly sank into a slough of words. (We must have some brisker draughts, surely, than these before we go to the country.)

In the bar of the House of Commons I asked a few questions. What in a few words do I say about housing, food, employment? I am much patted on the back, referred back and forth, given hints on technique, "remember you are in a strong position on a platform. . . ."

This has been a strange journey, the little way it has gone. I have formulated my convictions, matched them with the Labour programme, and taken from books what I lacked. Now I am on the road. No longer the cosy discussions on the iniquities of this policy and that, no longer the shared dreams of a society without sin, no longer the easy lefty talk healing the world by words.

At the first meeting the billed notability did not arrive, so I took on the job alone. When not too preoccupied with the answers I am resolved to keep a record of all questions asked. This first one was a town meeting: a bright, warm room and leading middle-class questions. Are you in favour of public schools? What are you going to do with the banks? Are you going to take away the houses from people who have bought them? What about P.R.?

Next I went to a little market town where the branch had been asleep these many years. Exactly how will the tied cottage be abolished? Will there be electric light in the country? Will the foreigner ruin our farming with imports? Do you believe that grinding could be done collectively? (Now they have a branch. That much is achievement.)

In the back room of a pub the audience next evening contained commuters, farm workers, a higher percentage of women, and two huntin'-an'-shootin' gentlemen. They were all crazy about housing. Would the houses be graded so that people could breed and move to larger grades? Would local people have a say in the character of the houses? Would the jerry-builder compete? How are rents to be kept down? Why not timber houses? (Now they intend to make a housing survey in their own district.)

The journey continues. It is an education, a toughening of the wits, the belief, the intelligence to stand there alone among strangers in the winter evenings and seek simple words to answer such questions. Mine is not an uncommon experience. There must be similar journeys beginning throughout Britain. So far I conclude thus. Don't believe the talk about apathy. Believe that issues, like factions, must be resolved to black and white. Beware of booby traps on the home front. Remember that the Forces, too, are not just a lot of Tommies for whom the B.B.C. ladles a special programme of slush, but as vital sections of the electorate as any.

You see, in my little wilderness I am already become didactic: but that is not because I have been keeping company with fools.

CANDIDATE

MYSTERIES

GOING into a Sussex inn the other evening I sat down beside a gamekeeper I knew who was putting a problem to his neighbour. "It's a funny thing," he said, "but if you weigh a bird in a cage and the bird is sitting on its perch, the weight of the cage is the weight of the cage and the bird put together. *But*"—and he emphasised the "but" by pointing his finger—"if the bird flies off the perch, so long as it is in the air it weighs nothing, and the weight of the cage is the weight it was before minus the weight of the bird. You see? The bird's still in the cage, and yet the bird and the cage together now weigh less. Why is it?"

We all preserved a thoughtful silence till a gardener asked: "What kind of a bird?" "It doesn't matter what kind of a bird," said the gamekeeper. "A lark's more likely to keep flying about in a cage than a canary," the gardener insisted. "A canary will do just as well as a lark," the gamekeeper told him, "while the bird's in the air, though it's inside the cage it doesn't add to the weight of the cage. Will any of you tell me why?" As I listened I felt that I was back in the Golden Age of the Brains Trust. I felt, too, that I knew the answer to the question, but, at the same time, I doubted whether I could make it intelligible to anybody except myself. How clever the mathematicians are in such matters; they simply say: "Let x equal the weight of the cage and y equal the weight of the bird," and the problem is solved as lucidly as can be in a couple of seconds.

"Well, it's like this," explained the gamekeeper. "You see my finger"—and he held his forefinger down into the empty space at the top of his beer mug. "My finger's now inside the mug, but it doesn't add to the weight of the mug, but if it was chopped off and laid in the bottom of the mug, the mug would be the heavier by the weight of my finger, wouldn't it? As it is, it's in the air and, so far as the mug is concerned, it doesn't weigh anything. And it's the same with the bird in the cage. It's quite simple when you come to think of it." Most of us nodded in agreement but the gardener shook his head and said: "It's a bloody mystery."

I cannot remember how the talk turned from this to religion. Perhaps talk about one mystery led to talk about another. The talk on religion was curiously unlike anything I should have expected. In most of the rustic novels I have read, countrymen in inns have been rather sceptical—or at least humanistic—in their discussions on religion; and, in the last of the rare arguments I had heard on the subject in a public house, scarcely anybody present seemed to believe even in a future life. Here, in Sussex, however, everybody was on the side of the angels. "If ever I feel a doubt," said the gamekeeper, "I remind myself of the passage in the 'Book of Revelations,' where the Angel says to Saint John: 'These things are faithful and true,' and Saint John tells us: 'And I, John, saw these things and heard them.'" He looked round the company and slowly repeated the last sentence: "'And I, John, saw these things and heard them.' You can't get over that," he said. "By God! you can't," said another gamekeeper, taking the pipe from his mouth.

"Who made the sun and the moon?" said the first gamekeeper. "You and I didn't. Somebody must have done it. I never yet met an atheist who could answer that simple question, 'Who made the sun and the moon?'" "And the stars," said the gardener. "And night and day," said a clean-shaven farmer; "and the tides. Backward and forward, backward and forward, all the time. It's a mystery, ain't it?" "Well," said the first gamekeeper, "I once sat by the death-bed of an atheist. It was a terrible experience. He must have been one of the biggest atheists in the country, yet never have I heard a man pleading for mercy as he did. There was another big atheist there and he said to him: 'You have lived like a man. Die like a man!' But the poor fellow

n bed cried out: 'I can't. I can't.' It would ave broken your heart to hear him. I don't mind elling you the tears were streaming down my heeks. If ever a man pleaded for mercy, that an did. I can hear his voice even now while 'm talking to you." We all kept silent for a few oments, when the farmer, looking round the ompany, asked: "Anybody for a game of darts?" nd soon there was no sound to be heard but the ck of darts on the board and the counting of he scores.

After a little, the gardener came and sat beside he and asked me: "Did you ever see such a eautiful night?" The night was certainly per-ect. A cloudless sky was filled with a multitude f lights shining so brightly that the reflection of he beams of Venus made a path across the pond ike the path made by the reflection of a rising noon over the sea. "All the same, it's going to ain," said the gardener knowingly. "You mean hat the air is too clear," I said. "It's not only hat," he replied. "Did you notice Old Jack in the Waggon? He's hanging upside down to-night, nd that always means that he's going to pour the ater out of his waggon." Jack in the Waggon, was easy to guess, was his name for the Great ear. Whether Jack always empties his waggon f its liquor when in that particular position I do ot know; but he certainly emptied it later on hat night. I wish I had the energy to keep a iary so that I might be able to calculate how any of these weather prophecies of the country-ide have the support of prolonged experience.

I wonder whether scientists themselves have ver made a thorough investigation of the evi-ence for and against the truth of country beliefs. Have they ever, for example, made experimental ests of the truth of the statement that pigs can-ot swim, because, if they attempt to do so, they ut their throats with their forefeet? I have asked everal farmers whether this statement is true; hey have all said that they had often heard it, ut none of them had ever seen a pig swimming. s a boy I accepted traditions of this kind with-ut evidence; but, as I grow older, I become nore Baconian in my desire for proof. Another uestion about pigs that I should like to see ettled one way or another is: Do pigs see the vind? In my childhood everybody in the country elieved—or at least said—that pigs could see the vind coming; but I never heard any proof of this. One farmer did tell me recently, indeed, that his ld father used to declare, not only that pigs could ee the wind, but that he himself could see it. But this may have been an optical illusion. At he same time I am inclined to believe that some reatures do see or, if you prefer it, foresee the vind. If rooks dance and dive above a field on a alm day, is this not invariably followed by empestuous weather? I have certainly always elieved so, evidence or no evidence.

Even if science could give us the answer to very question, however, with all the evidence set orth, we should still find ourselves living in a vorld of mysteries and surprises. For one thing, one of us could absorb more than a small por-ion of the knowledge to be found in books. We hould forget most of it a few days after we had ead it. Hence even the commonest instruments n our houses remain mysteries to half the popu-ation. I, for example, can never remember how he telephone works, or how the wireless, or how he electric stove. Many people cannot remem-er such simple things as why it is inaccurate if it is inaccurate) to say that dew falls. Memory lays such havoc with knowledge, indeed, that very man, till the day of his death, must be in ome sort an ignoramus. But most of us lack ven knowledge. We do not know why birds sing, hough we may have read the latest theory as to hy they sing. It is an unplumbed mystery to s why a chaffinch sings only for a brief season, whereas a robin may sing at almost any date in he year. I can never remember whether it has een settled beyond dispute how the cuckoo eposits its egg in a small bird's nest. It is hard o believe that the coming and going of birds n the migration season will ever cease to be a mysterious business whatever well-backed explanations may be given of it. Man, I suspect, will preserve his sense of mystery till the end of time. He will still be an animal—or a spirit—capable of being surprised.

And how interesting even small surprises are! It was interesting, for example, to hear from a neighbour during the January frosts how four of his eggs froze so that when they were dropped from their shells into the frying pan they had the solid shape of eggs hard-boiled. If this were a common occurrence one would think little of it, but, as I had never heard of such a thing before it astonished me like a minor miracle. Another neighbour reported that he had two bottles of whisky which froze, with the result that the glass broke and the whisky was lost. That, too, surprised me, as I have never before heard of alcohol freezing in the English climate. A matter for gossip, you may think, but not really mysterious. Well, perhaps not. Not so mysterious as the bird that can be in a cage without adding to the weight of it. Still to me it was, like the story of the frozen eggs, a surprising piece of news and seemed wonderful enough to relate to my friends as one of the early marvels of the year 1945.

Y. Y.

RADIO NOTES

PARTICULAR criticism of radio plays is usually not worth making, because people do not want to read about something they may not have heard and will probably never have another chance of hearing. In the case of Shakespeare, however, discussion is never idle, since the play may be expected to come round again sooner or later. It is a pleasure to be able to say, without much reservation, that *Julius Cæsar* was the best Shakespearean performance we have had on the air for a long time—and by far the best of the present series, which has not hitherto been very happy. This is a preponderantly rhetorical play, and thus well suited to the medium; the main difficulty being to avoid muddle in the first two acts, which contain none of the best things in the play. The legion of disembodied male voices can be bewildering, but in this production careful spacing and skilful casting compensated for the inherent disadvantages. Antony Hopkins' fanfares and drum figures were very effective, but he should have been allowed to write music to replace the bald indications of scene-change. Fifteen seconds of imaginative music is both less obtrusive and more evocative than an announcer's consoling voice saying: "A street in Rome. Night." The chief parts were memorably acted, though I thought Alan Wheatley badly miscast as Cassius. Mr. Wheatley is a very able actor, and he put up an excellent show—from the distance of his temperament, which is compact of sensibility; but surely Cassius—both Plutarch, and after him Shakespeare, insist on the *choleric* nature of his personality—ought to suggest pop eyes and a bull neck. Robert Speaight interpreted Brutus to perfection, setting off Carleton Hobbs' razor-like Cæsar with the gentle reasonableness of his always beautiful voice. Brutus is less like Hamlet (to whom he has often been compared) than like Macbeth—a resemblance that emerged very strikingly in the quarrel with Cassius and the scenes with the harp-player and Cæsar's ghost, which are the most interesting and beautiful in the play. Not Brutus, but the slyboots Antony, is the villain of this piece. Godfrey Tearle made him a thought too noble, but his delivery of the famous speeches was thrilling. The whole production—and this was a great merit—left one with a strong sense of the brutal horror which underlay life in ancient Rome. The marmoreal perfection of the great writers of the golden age leaves a misleading impression, and the "high Roman fashion" disguises much which would otherwise remind us forcibly that Christianity came not a moment too soon. That wholly delightful programme, Louis MacNeice's version of *The Golden Ass*, reinforced this lesson.

The plans of the drama department for the next three months, as outlined in this week's *Radio Times* by Val Gielgud, are not particularly inspiring. Saturday Night Theatre has, deservedly, established itself as a favourite; but elsewhere I would prefer to see less reliance on adaptation (either from stage plays or from novels) and more signs that efforts were being made to interest the best contemporary writers in radio drama. Unless and until these can be induced to see in the microphone a unique opportunity for imaginative experiment, radio drama is bound to remain—with an occasional striking exception—a second-rate affair. And even within the field of adaptation one would like to see more courage exercised. By all means let us have as much Shakespeare as possible, but let us also be sometimes reminded that Shakespeare had several contemporaries who wrote plays which we might enjoy if we ever heard them. That the listening public as a whole is unaware of this, is not a good reason for leaving it in that state. *The White Devil, Arden of Feversham, The Broken Heart, The Revenger's Tragedy, The Witch of Edmonton:* all these and many more could be most effectively transferred to the microphone. Meanwhile (to express gratitude for small mercies) it is good news that "Appointment with Fear" is to return. I hope that the editor of this entertaining series will not forget that the novels and stories of Sheridan Le Fanu are among the most imaginative horrors ever contrived. They are full of atmosphere, and could be adapted without difficulty.

RECOMMENDATIONS:—Feb. 21st. Symphony Concert; Elgar, Sibelius, Mozart, Debussy. *The Monkey's Paw.* W. W. Jacobs' famous thriller. (G.F.P.)

February 23rd. *Red Star*—Red Army feature (G. D. Bridson).

March 4th. Henry Wood Memorial Concert.

March 5th. *The Harbour called Mulberry* (Cecil McGivern).

March 7th. New *Sinfonietta*, by E. J. Moeran.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

"EMMA" AT THE ST. JAMES'S THEATRE

THERE are two ways in which this play may be regarded. If it is just a comedy of situation, elaborately and charmingly dressed and decorated, plastered with applied risibilities, ingeniously ringing the changes on the opportunities of error open to a feather-pated and imperious girl serenely conscious of a genius for match-making, with three young men and three young women, including herself, to manipulate, it may be reckoned a success, sure of amusing and pleasing many audiences. But if it is a serious attempt to put Jane Austen's novel on the stage, it must I am afraid be called a failure. It gives little of what makes the book a masterpiece.

The essential thing about the characters in *Emma* is that they are real people: their comicality is innate, not imposed by the author: and they live in the present tense. On the stage they are incessantly playing up to the producer's notion of "period": they trip about the room, they strike attitudes, they mince. One can't believe in them for a moment.

In the matter of dialogue and incident, allowance must be made for the prodigious difficulty of transferring the masterpiece to the theatre; but it might have been more deftly done than here. Mr. Glennon seems to have said, as Tweedledum and Tweedledee say of their accoutrements, "All these must be got in somehow"; and in the result the most famous utterances of the characters appear all tattered and torn, or in an unbecoming context. One example from the dialogue: "Surrey, you know," says Mrs. Elton at her first recorded meeting with Emma, "is the garden of England." *Emma:* "Yes, but we must not rest our claims on that distinction. Many counties, I believe, are called the garden of England as well as Surrey." *Mrs. E.:* "No, I fancy not. I never heard any county but Surrey called so." Surely room could have been found for Mrs. Elton's second remark, which gives the passage its value; but it is cut. And from another incident: In the book, Frank Churchill goes to London on an errand connected with his secret engagement to Jane Fairfax, and explains on his return that he went to get his hair cut. In the play, he gives the same explanation, but adds immediately that he had another reason in the serious illness of his aunt; thus making nonsense of Emma's subsequent comment on his coxcombry. Moreover, it is only natural that the adapter should often have to make the personages express

in speech what Miss Austen has presented as their inmost thoughts and emotions; but Mr. Glennon has not always been happy in his choice of occasion. A crucial case is Emma's final outpouring of her feelings about Knightley, which is addressed, of all unlikely people, to Miss Bates.

The acting is mostly good on its own lines, which I think are the wrong ones. Mr. Cecil Ramage, in the small part of Mr. Weston, was the only performer who fully achieved the standard of reality which I wish to establish. He was completely credible. By a paradox, Miss Margaret Vines, with her strangely vibrant voice and her hidden fires, makes the next most convincing character out of the one who is least so in the novel, Jane Fairfax. Mr. Frank Allenby is a manly and engaging Knightley (spelt Knightly in the programme), but, perhaps because he does not make his smile rare enough, he lacks something of the aloofness and seniority which keep him "Mr. Knightley" till at the very end Emma plucks up courage to call him George. He, and others in the cast, should beware of the intercalary r ("Emma(r) isn't," etc.), a modern conception which can hardly have reared its ugly head so early as 1815.

Miss Austen admitted that she didn't expect Emma to be a favourite with any one except herself; but Miss Anna Neagle, in her grace and charm, runs no such danger with the audience. It is probably the fault of the producer that her vivacity turns to restlessness—the real Emma had poise, at any rate in manner; and it is certainly the adapter's fault that she has none of the fundamental though inexperienced good sense which one feels will make a great woman of Emma when she has learnt her lesson. Miss Gillian Lind shows her versatility and causes great amusement by a clever and accomplished performance as Miss Bates; but she isn't *my* Miss Bates. She plays the part staccato, with pretty little birdlike twitterings, instead of the glorious continuity, the strong steady flow incapable of interruption even by her own inconsequence, which carries the reader in delight over pages of ridiculous monologue; and though she is very good-natured, she has not the broad, beaming benevolence of her prototype.

Miss Ambrosine Phillpotts provides the most riotous comedy of the evening with a towering, overpowering Mrs. Elton. Her discomfiture when Jane administers a "set-down" about the relative sizes of Encombe and the Vicarage—probably the best of Mr. Glennon's own embroideries—is highly enjoyable. Mrs. Weston, whose manners were remarkable for their "propriety, simplicity, and elegance," is nearly as much of a flibbertigibbet as Emma or Harriet; and Mr. Woodhouse has been badly served by the adapter. He becomes a mere tetchy selfish old fool, with only now and then a glimmer of the courteous and gentle benignity which for all his absurdities wins him the affection of his neighbours and of everybody who reads about him.

My last stricture shall be the first that occurred to me. "One of our small eggs, boiled by Serle—I would not recommend an egg boiled by anyone except Serle." A glance at the programme showed that Serle was to be, not the cook, but the butler, who should have been given a less numinous name.

EDWARD MARSH

WATER-COLOURS

THE annual exhibition of water-colours at Agnew's is always a pleasure—and more than ever in these years when museums are vacant and travel the rarest of privileges. This year Turner takes us to Swiss lakes and rivers, Cozens to the Grande Chartreuse, Cotman to Falaise, Bonington to Les Andelys, Francis Towne to Tivoli, Shotter Boys to Paris, Callow to the Loire, David Roberts to Palestine, and J. Warwick Smith to a variety of sites including Chamonix and Pozzuoli. What a paradise of the picturesque was offered by Europe a hundred years ago, how enviable these artists who could post from place to place, dallying where a church was particularly flamboyant, a cascade particularly tumultuous! And then the home-keeping men, Constable, de Wint, David Cox, Turner of Oxford, sketching in a country unpocked by bungalows under skies without aircraft! The quality of imagination brought by the water-colourists to their always blissful subjects was very various, but the tradition of accomplishment was remarkably high. Apart from the Birket Fosters—how greedily I look forward to the destined slump in his prices!—there is hardly an exhibit that one would not be happy to possess. A Constable drawing (*The Trees*), a Cotman (*The Storm*), and one of the finest de Wints I have ever seen (*The Dale*) compete with a resplendent assembly of Turners, some of them notably though unconsciously Chinese. Gainsborough, Rowlandson, Francia and J. Ward are other artists who are admirably represented. The moderns, Muirhead Bone, Charles Holmes, and Wilson Steer do not seem so happy, though the Augustus John drawings are uncommonly good. Altogether a show to visit more than once.

The Leger Gallery exhibits a series of water-colours by William Scott, whom I consider in the front rank of the English young. Unluckily he is in the Army, and has been able to paint only in the intervals of loading lorries, etc. This exhibition therefore does inadequate justice to his talent, though you can see in the best of them his peculiar gift for "placing"—that is for the size of emphatic forms and the exact regulation of the intervals between them. Perhaps only because of adverse conditions, Mr. Scott seems less assured in water-colours than in oils. But if the exhibition is uneven, the best things in it reveal very clearly how striking a talent lies temporarily all but buried.

The Redfern Gallery is showing a delightful collection of lithographs and etchings, mostly French. The group of Camille Pissarros is unfamiliar and specially rewarding—look at the two lithographs of bathing women. Miss Frances Richards's *Toiles brodées* are excellently tasteful, unpretentious, and "unarty"—models in fact of fanciful decorative art.

ROGER MARVELL

THE MOVIES

"Arsenic and Old Lace," at Warner's
"The Thin Man Goes Home," at the Empire

Though I haven't yet seen the play *Arsenic and Old Lace* (next year, one says to oneself, next year, when the rush is over), I know it very well by proxy. I know it's funny; I know also exactly *how* it's funny. The film, which I come to first, is a sad disappointment. Nothing wrong with the situation, of course. The charming old ladies dispense charity and despatch the lonely loiterer to kingdom come. There is Mr. Soskins, for example, in the chest by the window; nice Mr. Soskins, though he was a methodist; he is due to be moved to the cellar where the eleven others have found their resting place. And Uncle Theodore Roosevelt, with his trumpet and his Panama excavations, will do the burial as usual. And everything is sweet and innocent and as mad as Maldoror. How could it go wrong? Well, under Mr. Frank Capra's direction, it does. He underlines every joke, repeats every situation, makes the visiting nephew (Cary Grant) jump and grimace like a chimpanzee, and administers the *coup de grâce* with the entrance of Uncle Jonathan: Raymond Massey made up to look like Boris Karloff and alas—as it turns out—as gruesomely boring as Mr. Karloff. The result is, apart from the first half-hour, screamingly unfunny. We almost lose sight of the old ladies; we long—in the midst of Bedlam—for the fun and flavour which, I am sure, distinguish the original. It is a pity, because obviously there was the chance here, given a lyrical touch, of matching that featherweight shocker, *A Slight Case of Murder*.

Better too flat than too forced. The irresistible pair in *The Thin Man Goes Home* prove irresistible again, despite a script very weak in patches. It takes a long time introducing the characters. Nick Carter? Who on earth is he? And Mrs. Carter—haven't we met her before somewhere? They've got a dog, too, that—ha, ha!—has a yellow streak, I'm afraid, but you'll love him. All this has to be gone through for the sake of filmgoers seeing Mr. Powell and Miss Loy for the first time together. But they can even repeat themselves with style. Mr. Powell, I'm sorry to say, is still on the water waggon—unless you count cider—and develops a belated father-phobia that would have seemed monstrous in the old days of gin and gallantry. His new case must be solved in a way that will impress papa. Miss Loy helps, or tries to. The funniest sequence in the film is where she slips away to follow her suspect (wrong man, of course) and is in turn shadowed by a real crook with a sinister purpose. When one stops in the dark empty street the others have to stop too: Miss Loy finds herself gazing into the lights of a barber's shop where all the customers get up to greet this vision. The domestic exchanges and leg-pulling are as winning as ever; brisk detective interest, small town setting. Though not on the original *Thin Man* level, this is an amusing film which one could hardly help enjoying.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

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Correspondence

DEMOCRACY IN THE ARMY

SIR,—I was most interested to read the review by Norman MacKenzie of *A Soldier Looks Ahead*, by Captain "X," in your issue of December 16th.

In units which I have commanded I have often made efforts to stimulate "democratic" methods of unit administration. I am at present trying to get a "Unit Parliament" going, with complete control of all P.R.I. funds, complete control over such things as welfare, recreations, leave allotments and so on, and with power to discuss freely anything under the sun, subject to my veto (which, like the King in the British Constitution, I sincerely hope I shall never have to exercise) on any "Bill" which may be passed and which could not be put into force without disrupting the over-all Army organisation. The scheme is going reasonably well. It is not yet a great success—the majority of the men are apathetic about it, but there are enough who are sufficiently interested so far to keep it going.

I have suggested other ideas. I never impose these ideas, merely throw them out and draw up a rough sketch plan of how they might be run—if the men want to run them. In most cases the results are very disappointing in the sense that no one is interested. In a few cases the schemes are highly successful in the sense that 10 per cent. of the men take them up and run them and derive benefit from them (Unit Library, Discussion Groups, Brains Trust, Debates, Amateur Dramatics, Concert Parties, Voluntary A.B.C.A., Weekly War Commentary—these are the sort of things). In no case, either in my present unit overseas nor in two other units of the same nature which I commanded in U.K., have I *ever* got more than 15 per cent. of the men even interested enough to come along to see what it was all about unless I made it a compulsory parade—which I only did once because the scheme was part of an official scheme which all C.O.s were required to investigate and implement, if possible.

I should not want anyone to think that I am in any way discouraged by this apathy—far from it. I know only too well that the great majority of the men in the Army to-day are sick and tired of the war, and of the Army, and want nothing more than to get the war over and get home and away from regimentation and routine. Because they feel like this, they view with suspicion all attempts to make their lives *in the Army* more interesting and "worth-while." Over and above all this war-weariness, it is undoubtedly true that there is a very large percentage (my experience tempts me to put it as high as 60 per cent.) of the men in the Army who have not the slightest interest in anything except their own personal affairs, their job, their prospects in the event of unemployment, their home and their recreations (too often only watching football matches and betting on dog tracks, with two or three visits each week to the cinema).

I admit that much of the existing apathy may be traced to a shockingly defective education system and a lack of proper opportunities for mental and social development in formative years—but the odd thing is that it is so often the *younger* men who are the least responsive; those who are now 20–25 and who

have come to manhood only since the war began and brought, with its pain and misery, new opportunities for adult education and social understanding.

LT.-COLONEL, R.A.O.C.

THE LITTLE CLIQUE

SIR,—I have a cross-bench mind, with a slight penchant to the Left. I cannot flatter myself that I am an original thinker as I always find that what I think to-day other people thought yesterday. I am, I suppose, a unit in the Floating Vote, that inarticulate and undependable mass which sometimes exerts itself with overwhelming force.

I distrusted Neville Chamberlain, loathed the policy of appeasement, admitted that "Munich" was perhaps inevitable at that time, hated Hitler from 1933 on, and always supported Churchill in his pre-war stand for a realistic policy. My allegiance has not been diminished by the episodes mentioned in Mr. Hogg's letter, but I am definitely upset over Greece, and I don't think I qualify for "The Little Clique."

I feel that Churchill and supporters of his Greek policy are protesting too much. Just as I was dubbed a "jitterbug and warmonger" when I opposed appeasement, so now I am being "fooled" when I am anxious over Greece. I am asked to believe that E.L.A.S. were 100 per cent. villainous, that all the wrong and cruelty were on their side and only on their side. I am overwhelmed with evidence from Mr. Leeper and others. I am given conclusive evidence. And I feel that, if only it were less conclusive, how much more conclusive it would be. As things are, even Citrine's broadcast becomes suspect.

I want to be persuaded. But all this 100 per cent. propaganda is over-persuasive. What I need is just a definite answer to a number of plain questions raised in all good faith by you, sir, and by Members of the House, and that is exactly what I am not getting.

CROSS-BENCH MIND

A PUBLIC DEFENDER?

SIR,—"No case; abuse plaintiff's attorney." The old recipe leapt to my mind as the question-master at last week's Brains Trust tried to cover up the mess his team had made of this question, but suggesting blandly that the questioner did not quite understand what he was talking about.

Sir, he understood very well, and his question deserved more intelligent answers. Joad said the State was bound to prosecute "criminals," not to defend them. Momentarily, indeed, he remembered that accusation does not prove guilt, but no one remembered that a miscarriage of justice is a greater hurt to society than an unpunished crime. Gilbert Murray, always on the side of the angels, fell into the error of thinking that a kindly judge, who knows nothing of the case but what he hears in court, is able to look after the interests of the "poor prisoner." Lord Samuel said that one man could not be Public Defender for everybody. Agreed; but nor can a Public Prosecutor prosecute everybody. He has a department, and functions when and where he is needed through barristers employed by that department. The Public Defender does likewise in States which employ him. Why not?

One or two "Brains" talked as if the Poor Man's Lawyer appeared in court for the defence in criminal cases; in fact, he merely advises out of court and in civil cases only.

The question is important. Lord Rushcliffe's Committee is considering the whole problem of legal aid for poor persons. The present law (Poor Prisoners' Defence Act, 1930) requires magistrates to grant legal aid to poor prisoners charged with murder, from the first appearance in court; it permits them to grant it in other cases where they think it desirable; it permits Courts of Quarter Sessions and Assize to grant it where they think desirable. Now defence, to be effective, must start in the Magistrates' Court. You cannot whistle up witnesses, sift evidence and prepare a case in half an hour with the judge and jury waiting. Yet the permissive sections of the Act have proved almost a dead letter. Magistrates' Courts tried 761,437 cases in 1938, and they sent 10,003 cases for trial. Legal aid was granted in only 327 cases of the first group and in 2,530 cases in the second. In 975 cases applications for legal aid were refused.

The Howard League wants to make the English system work, that is, to ensure that no man, innocent or guilty, is given an unjust sentence for lack of means to plead his case effectively. We want a fair assessment of means, an extension of the categories of cases where legal aid must be granted, and above all we want every accused person to be clearly told of his right to legal aid at the moment of arrest or service of summons. At present accused persons know as little about the matter as does the Brains Trust.

If, however, this system is not made to function, then we shall have to consider whether a Public Defender charged with the defence of poor prisoners should not be appointed in England, as he has been appointed in several progressive States of the U.S.A.

Justice, it was said, is open to all, like the Ritz. We must make it open to all—like the King's Highway.

CICELY M. CRAVEN

The Howard League for Penal Reform,
Parliament Mansions,
Abbey Orchard Street, S.W.1.

PROBLEMS OF MOTHERHOOD

SIR,—I note in a recent *Daily Telegraph* that the Saffron Walden Hospital has had to close its maternity ward as the midwife has left and another midwife cannot be found. A laconic comment by the Ministries of Health and Labour follows to the effect that they will try, *if possible*, to provide the hospital with a trained midwife.

Surely no more perfect example could be found of the way in which every possible form of propaganda is used to force up the birth rate on one hand and parents are completely let down on the other. The expectant mothers who now have to worry as to where they can have their babies instead of going to Saffron Walden Hospital are among the many women in England, who, either expecting or already having babies, are beset by a thousand worries which they did not foresee when they so gladly awaited their first baby.

If the Government wants more children it is only fair for mothers to be told beforehand that the Ministry of Labour will not make any effort to supply help when the mother who runs the home, cleaning and cooking for the family and looking after the baby, falls ill and has literally no one to call upon for help. The Ministry of Health should warn expectant mothers that they will never regain their full health if they have to do a normal day's work a fortnight after the baby is born.

The Ministry to whom it applies should give a warning that bottle teats are almost impossible to obtain, that a request for tuberculin tested milk causes friction with the milkman, and that such luxuries as hair cot mattresses and suitable cot blankets are unobtainable in some parts of the country. The question of suitable accommodation, which is as difficult to find as it possibly can be, is too huge to be entered into in a short letter.

An enormous amount of space is taken up in the various newspapers and magazines by Ministry of Food notices drawing parents' attention to the fact that bottles of cod-liver oil and orange juice are vital for babies and can be obtained from any Food Office. This is one of the few contributions the Government makes towards a more healthy generation. Does the Government realise that mothers are nearly always prepared to take an immense amount of trouble to ensure that their babies are well, even if they do not have cod-liver oil or orange juice, but that the present generation of mothers is fast becoming exhausted with all the domestic problems that they have to surmount?

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THE BATTLE FOR DORSET

SIR,—I was pleased to see the threatened retention of areas in Dorset around Studland and Tyneham after the war as permanent battle ranges mentioned in "A London Diary," and the following additional facts may be of interest to those of your readers who still have a sneaking hope that there will be some place for beauty in the post-war world.

That peninsula in Dorset known as the Isle of Purbeck managed to remain practically unspoilt up to the outbreak of the present war. The unique stretch of coastline from Swanage to Osmington was not disfigured with "development" and the whole area had for those who knew and loved it a rare and indescribable atmosphere and charm. It was one of those parts of England that have somehow acquired through the centuries something individual and indefinable, but, alas, destructible under the impact of modern unimaginativeness.

During this war I have seen what the combined efforts of the War Department, the Ministry of Supply (with deforestation) and the Air Ministry could achieve in the spoilation of that rare peninsula. It was a painful process to stand on the tumulus at Swyre Head and see on the east hand the woodlands of Encombe Bowl fall beneath the axe and on the west hand the downs running down to Kimmeridge Bay being turned into a tank training ground. However, such sights, and others even sadder, were necessary for the war effort, and the hope was cherished that after the war Purbeck would be left to recover in peace, and her exiles to return to their stone farmhouses and cottages.

But now it appears that another battle has to be fought, and if there are some among your readers to whom the names of Arish Mell, Worbarrow, Brandy Bay, Flowers Barrow and Steeple, are music, I can only hope that they can make their protests heard in time to prevent the War Department from going ahead with its plans to turn that isle of refreshment for the soul into a permanent battle range.

57 Braidley Road, MARY MUNSLOW
Bournemouth.

TEACHING HISTORY

SIR,—I must confess that I was a bit staggered when I read Y.Y.'s "History Lesson," more staggered when I read A. S. Turberville's approval.

My job is to teach a class of fifty nine-year-old elementary school children in a large industrial city. I used to use up my two half-hour lessons a week with "appeals to imagination," which, of course, is demonstrably balderdash. I shudder to-day to think of the confusion with which I filled those young minds, with stories of everything from the Trojan War to Romulus and Remus, burnt cakes, knights, the Round Table and the Crusades. For these children, for whom the economic struggle is unbelievably close, familiarity with poverty, "the sack," war, no boots till the wages come in on Friday, death silent and stark in the living room, what could all these pretty tales of King Priam, knights and ladies, possibly mean? I made a new start. *Vixere ante Agamemnona multi.* So I told them of the origin of man, of *homo sapiens*, of his advantages over other animals, of the food gatherers, the ice age, neolithic man's religion and magic, the rise of the first river valley civilisations, the secondary civilisations of Greece and Rome, the rise of feudalism, and its destruction by the merchant class, and of the growth of industrialism. Ridiculous, you may say. Not as ridiculous as the Pentateuch or as difficult for children, or as the Odyssey, for that matter. These children will never have the wide-spread national and colour prejudices of the child who has been taught history in the "imaginative" way. Moreover, for a nine-year-old in an industrial slum, his life became integrated in an amazing way. My class became alive: it was difficult to dismiss them: they had so many questions to ask: books appeared from heaven knows where, brought to show others everything from the amœba to the palace of Cnossus. In a long teaching career I have yet to meet a single case of A. S. Turberville's "unimaginative child," but no wonder that they appear to be so when fed with the unreal confusing stories of high-sounding nothing. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

27 Nelson Road,
Hartshill, Stoke-on-Trent.

CRUELTY TO CHILDREN

SIR,—In a recent comment Critic called attention to the interesting fact that drivers no longer flog their horses in the streets as they did in the days of his (and my) youth. Public opinion, if my recollection is correct, quite suddenly turned against such exhibitions of brutality as a result of the activities of the R.S.P.C.A.

How much longer will it be, I wonder, before public opinion puts a stop to the flogging of boys in schools? It is entirely contrary to the conscience of the majority, yet it still persists because, for the most part, it is hidden from public knowledge. Many people, indeed, regard it as "a thing of the past." It is; but it is far more prevalent in the present than is generally supposed.

It is a pity that the R.S.P.C.A. cannot extend its terms of reference to include boys. Horses do not grow up to become clergymen, schoolmasters or judges, and history only records one instance of a horse holding high public office. The shaping of the equine character is, therefore, of concern only to the animal's owner.

The disciplinary system of our public schools, on the other hand, has helped to make Tory politicians what they are to-day. CHARLES ESAM-CARTER

Ross-on-Wye.

WAR PRIORITIES

SIR,—May I ask you to explain the point of holding up to ridicule in "This England" an advertisement which seems to me to embody common sense? "A good housemaid is required to take care of old furniture . . ."

One of the problems of this war with its necessary shortage of domestic labour, has been the proper care of old and beautiful furniture, of carpets and curtains, of inlay and metal work and of objets d'art of all kinds so that "moth and rust" do not creep in, and things of value and beauty—a heritage from a more civilised past—do not fall utterly into decay. The penetrating dirt of the Blitzes and the damp and cold of unheated country houses make this an urgent problem. Would you uphold the care of such things when they are, say, in the Victoria and Albert Museum? Is it only when they are in private ownership that you think they do not matter? HORATIA SEYMOUR

Westerham, Kent.

AN AFRICAN REBUKE

SIR,—Thank you for yours of November 28th, 1944, acknowledging receipt of my article on West Africa.

It is interesting, but far from convincing is your carefully-worded pet excuse for not giving the necessary publication as a counter reply to your contributor to whom the article in question refers.

Your letter also exhibits a clear parochial picture that the great bulk of your readers and well-wishers are imperialists with the idea of Colonial Imperialism; no doubt to give publication to that article might contribute to some meticulous reverse of interest by your readers.

I, therefore, from the existing reasons would refrain from reading a leaf or page of your journal which is more or less an avenue of crucifixion of West Africa and Africans. It is shocking that you have played the game of an admiral without a fleet or navy in these days of political consciousness, especially with younger Africans.

Perhaps you would be more careful in giving publication to matters relating to West Africa should such matter(s) stroll on to your editorial desk in the near future. M. A. OLIVER-STANLEY

Freetown, Sierra Leone.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

LAST month died—physically, officially, notifiably—Arthur Symons, born in 1865: poet, dramatist, impressionist traveller, eager enquirer into the theory and practice of what it pleased him to enumerate as the "seven arts": the arts of literature, music, painting, sculpture, architecture, handicraft, dancing and the stage. I make them eight; but it does not matter. It is, however, important to note that the indefatigable writer who in 1886 produced a slim volume on Browning which Browning tried to dissuade him from writing, the associate of all the "Ninetyish" poets and critics of the Rhymers' Club period, the too faithful disciple of Walter Pater, the friend and companion of George Moore and W. B. Yeats, died mentally—or to all creative effort—in 1908. Thereafter all that was published under his name must be "received with caution." The later books suggest that they were composed of fragments and plans prepared before his collapse. About the middle of the last World War he used to send me scraps of this sort, evidently supposing that they could be worked up into articles. His letters and talk gave me the impression that he had escaped into the past. One of his letters to me was written on the faded notepaper of his long-extinct review, *The Savoy*.

There is no need for reticence concerning this tragic case, for Symons has told the whole story in a scrappy book, padded with irrelevant reminiscences of other people, called *Confessions: A Study in Pathology*. This was issued, in a limited edition, in 1930. I do not remember that it received any publicity in this country. (It was published in New York.) It is an appalling study of one who awakes from a nightmare of persecution and imprisonment to review, with a strange lucidity, the horrible phantoms that still haunt him in retrospect, though he imagines himself to have recovered. Symons never recovered sufficiently to complete the vastly ambitious programme of æsthetic construction towards which, as long ago as 1903 (in *Plays, Acting and Music*), he was "gradually working his way." Each of his books was intended to form part of a series which should finally be "the concrete expression of a theory or system of æsthetics of all the arts." In each partial contribution, Symons, following Pater as usual, was to be "as little abstract as possible." Nevertheless, in criticism of the seven (or eight) arts, in the observation of the visible world as "a chief storehouse of beauty," in the reception of life as a form of art (Pater again), he was determined, he tells us, "to master the universal science of beauty." His critics of early days, never very kind to him, accused him of being the *petit maître*, the amateur, deliberately decadent. On the contrary, he had taken all æsthetic knowledge for his province. And to this continuous effort of appreciation he added the artistic explorer's task of promenading a curiously monotonous sensibility through all the most beautiful cities of Europe in order to record, not only their aspects, but their souls—or, rather, his part of their souls, for Symons could never quite make up his mind whether he wished to be a mirror reflecting, or an interpreter explaining: the interpreter in the House Beautiful. He tried to be both. The effort, in all directions, was immense. One supposes that, added to some hereditary taint, it may partly have accounted for his collapse.

He was never tired of proclaiming (after Théophile Gautier) that he was one "for whom the visible world exists." But did it? Not nearly so objectively as he believed. It certainly did not exist for his friend W. B. Yeats, who could not see it, did not care even to look at it; unless it were swathed in mists that veiled its solidity and gave the hope that it might suddenly vanish into Spiritus Mundi. Yeats did not approve of Symons's wanderings. He told me once, in Robert Gregory's rooms in Oxford, that a writer might be excused for seeking a soul in Venice, Seville or Rome. He added: "But when Symons went to *Moscow* I mocked. For what unity could there be in such a book?" I suggested: "The unity of Symons's temperament"; and, indeed, Symons might well have gone also to Chicago and Tokyo without failing to find the connecting thread, if only his temperament, his personality, had been rich enough to dominate the imposed diversity of impressions. Unfortunately, it was not. As one wanders with him through many scenes and streets, one becomes uneasily suspicious that one is always in the same place. All the cities seem to be afflicted with a faint melancholy. Most of the women in them appear to have no souls. "Dear God, the very houses seem asleep!" It is only in places that he hates—Moscow, Naples—that Symons awakens from a kind of day-dream and begins to discriminate, to differentiate. He reacted much better to repugnance than to admiration. He needed the stimulant of dislike. But all his life he was seeking for something to admire, and, I fear, someone to imitate. His receptivity reached the point of saturation from a hundred diverse directions. He was submerged by "influences" that he was not sufficiently original to classify and control.

The first and (for Symons) the worst of these was the influence of Walter Pater, his literary patron as well as his Master. It was Pater who secured the publication of Symons's first book of verse, *Days and Nights* (1889) in which, amongst decided promise of better things, we find a good deal of Browning's dramatic-monologue manner, a few of Tennyson's domestic or rustic idylls (Tennyson's Tales from Crabbe, as I may call them), a little, perhaps, of Patmore, and, in the sonnets, something from the Monna Innominata series in Christina Rossetti's *Pageant* (1881). There was not very much of the innermost Symons, who, however, added a pleasing spice of *fin de siècle* realism. Pater reviewed the book in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. "A poet with something to say," he headed the rather jerky little essay, and he spoke of the "significant title of *Nights and Days*"—getting that title wrong, in spite of its significance. "The rich poetic vintage of our time has run clear at last," he asserted. Readers "need fear no difficulty" in these poems. And he anticipated, in an awkward phrase, that "the *cachet* of a new-born poetry for ourselves may lie precisely in that gift of lucidity, given a genuine grapple with difficult matter." Alas! we know now that Pater was no prophet for the poetry about to be born. Privately he advised Symons: "Make prose your principal *métier*, as a man of letters, and publish your verse for those who already value you for your pedestrian work in literature."

I am not sure that the advice was sound. I think it would have been better for Arthur Symons had he remembered his own resolution: "Side by side with these studies in the arts I have my own art, that of verse, which is, after all, my chief concern." I think it would have been better had he ceased to exasperate his nerves by the perpetual endeavour to look, listen and understand; until, at last, the playing, say, of Chopin by Pachmann became no longer a delight, but a torment to him—

> The sounds torture me: I see them in my brain;
> They spin a flickering web of living threads,
> Like butterflies upon the garden beds,
> Nets of bright sound. . . .

Had he, indeed, made his own art of verse his chief concern, it might have subdued his restlessness:

> Peace waits among the hills;
> I have drunk peace,
> Here where the blue air fills,
> The great cup of the hills,
> And fills with peace. . . .

Symons's poetry has been underrated. In several of those "standard" Histories of English Literature or Poetry which insist upon trying to summarise contemporary achievement he is ignored. In the new Critical History of English Poetry by Grierson and Smith he is cursorily mentioned, in the chapter on the nineties, with Lionel Johnson and Ernest Dowson; in the Concise Cambridge History of English Literature he is curtly dismissed as profuse, diffuse, and as echoing Baudelaire in verse. This judgment seems to me grotesque in its injustice, as are so many judgments in histories that attempt to "place" those whom Time has not yet sorted in their ranks.

Again, had Symons developed the small but marked creative gift he reveals in the "imaginary portraits" of his *Spiritual Adventures*, he would have found himself much more effectively than in the visible world about him. The story of Seaward Lackland, who blasphemed in order to be saved, the fragment of autobiography in "A Prelude to Life," the tale of Christian Trevalga's musical madness, the sinister "Journal of Henry Luxulyan," with its melancholy picture of a haunted Venice—these are, indeed, "pathological cases," such as Symons was well fitted to understand.

I do not think we need regret his failure to realise his whole ambition as a theorist of the arts. His æsthetic ideas were of the simplest, and would be derided by the knowing practitioners of to-day. Why, he actually believed that "a work of art has but one reason for existence, that it should be a work of art, a moment of the eternity of beauty"! He wonders "how it can have entered the brains of men to doubt anything so obvious." What would the moderns have to say to anything so "obvious"? What would be said by Mr. Louis MacNeice—shrinking from "the bugbear of beauty"?

Symons turned from platitude to paradox in his contention that all the arts are equal; that art is concerned only with accomplishment, not with duration; that the sculptor's modelling in snow, therefore, can be as perfect as his modelling in marble, and—stranger still—that the creation of momentary beauty by an executant, a dancer, a pianist, is as important as the work they interpret. This would put Pachmann on a level with Chopin, Duse on a level with Ibsen. But even this paradox (in Diderot's sense) is not original: years before, in his brilliant essay on The Critic as Artist, Wilde had developed the thesis that criticism is creative. Executants are, in their way, critics or commentators.

Lack of originality was, indeed, the reproach constantly levelled against Arthur Symons after his tentative beginnings and as he produced book after book in display of his insatiable curiosity. He called Wilde an artist in attitudes. Wilde retorted by calling Symons an egoist without an ego. I am afraid that Wilde won that round.

As to Symons's attempt to make his own life a work of art, his great misfortune prevented him from realising it. But that ideal, difficult at any time, is now obviously unrealisable by any of us. Towers of Ivory have collapsed under bombs. Hard gem-like flames have been extinguished under the European black-out. The "ecstasy" we "maintain" is that of Fear. Symons, too, was haunted by fear, the fear of death which, he declared—I think justly—to be, not cowardice, but "an intellectual dissatisfaction with an enigma which has been presented to us, and which can be solved only when its solution is of no further use." Obviously! "All our lives are spent in busily forgetting death." But, faced by this terror of what Marcus Aurelius calls "the act of dying," Symons borrowed from the Stoic the consolatory thought of the oblivion that precedes "the little waking hour of Life out of sleep":

> When I consider the many million years
> I was not yet, and the many million years
> I shall not be, it is easy to think of the sleep
> I shall sleep for the second time without hopes or fears.
> Surely my sleep for the million years was deep?
> I remember no dreams for the million years, and it seems
> I may sleep for as many million years without dreams.

Does even that ring perfectly true? Or is there something of the "attitude" about it? I am sure that Symons felt it while he wrote it. At any rate, it will do for his epitaph. RICHARD JENNINGS

NEW NOVELS

Then a Soldier. By GEOFFREY COTTERELL. *Eyre and Spottiswoode.* 9s.

The North Wind of Love. Book I. By COMPTON MACKENZIE. *Chatto and Windus.* 10s. 6d.

Avalanche. By KAY BOYLE. *Faber.* 7s. 6d.

One of the handicaps which a novelist attempting to write realistically about the Army finds himself up against is the fact that certain words, banned by common and tacit consent from the printed page, are precisely those words which in the Army are most commonly used for all occasions of objurgation, lament, indignation, pleading and straightforward description. I think that by now, if we are to have war-novels at all (as seems likely), a reasoned plea might well be made to the censor for the admission of these words into printed prose—the frequency of their usage being in an agreed proportion to the length of the book. For a writer forced to avoid them by means of euphemism casts an air of curious unreality over his dialogue. Mr. Cotterell, for example, in *Then a Soldier*, accredits these remarks to one of his characters: "All right, you've obscenity well asked for it. Now you'll obscenity well get it." The pages which follow do not easily recover from this; and because Mr. Cotterell's book is for the most part so outstandingly life-like one finds oneself regretting this occasional enforced devitalisation.

Otherwise his book is completely satisfying, with its mass of justly selected detail so lovingly and ironically remembered, its perfect picture of the most unlikely people doing exactly what they are told for exactly so long as they are watched, and all moved by the confused dictates of some invisible power, doubtless imbecile. The enormous atmosphere of activity passively embarked on, the enforced obsession with minutiae, the sense of being *under* the mêlée, and not even level with it: all these things Mr. Cotterell recaptures. He recaptures also that slow realisation which comes, consciously or otherwise, to almost every soldier—or which came at any rate in the confused months of defence between Dunkirk and Pearl Harbour—that a little amount of cheek and daring, a tiny risk or two, demanding intellectual cunning and an air of innocence rather than physical courage, may extricate you from almost any military directive you do not wish to carry out. There is no particular story in Mr. Cotterell's book, but there is an excellent sense at once of the passage of time and of time standing still or repeating itself over and over. The principal characters, —Robert, the unsuccessful ex-journalist, sent to O.C.T.U. and dismissed from it, Jackie, the ex-jazz-pianist (for some reason described as having a long, thin body on the first page, and as being short, five pages later); and Les, an ex-grocer's assistant, brilliant at evasion—are perfectly real. The best thing in the book—indeed almost the key to its 1940–1 atmosphere—is the picture of Mr. Drenney, the incompetent, amiable, dreadfully muddled subaltern. His sudden lecture to the men on the problems of the Far East is one of those fine pieces of comedy which most soldiers will have seen closely paralleled at some time or other. The sense of stupefaction, the sense of not being able to follow *anything at all* that is being said, will be remembered by all soldiers who attended lectures by junior officers on map-reading in those years. "All of them," as Mr. Cotterell says, describing the listeners, "had the same impression: that they were in the presence of a man who had lost his mind."

The North Wind of Love is the fifth of Mr. Compton Mackenzie's *Four Winds*, and I regret that it is the first of his novels I have read for ten years. Certain of Mr. Mackenzie's best gifts stay vividly in the memory. He is not a good portrayer of character, and it is difficult to remember what Michael Fane and Sylvia Scarlett were like; what one does remember is his inexhaustible power of comic invention, and his remarkable orchestral talent for manipulating large groups of personalities. From both points of view, such books as *Vestal Fires* and *Extraordinary Women* were brilliant: the episode of Alberto's trousers in the first of these and the odyssey of the *vaso di notte* in the second are unforgettable pieces of farce; and one well recalls how deftly the crowds of characters in each book were moved about.

These two gifts remain unimpaired: there is an amazing comic escapade in the new book concerning the frustrated attempt of some young Scottish nationalists to abduct the Stone of Destiny from Westminster Abbey; and within twenty pages of the opening of the present volume, the author has subtly instructed the unread about the numerous character-relationships to date. But there is little action after this; it is doubtless Mr. Mackenzie's intention that his final volume, of which this is the first half, shall largely consist of a series of discussions, summing up his own beliefs; so that when the characters do actually do anything, their movements about England, America and Poland are only perfunctorily indicated. The hero's wife dies, but almost parenthetically; it is the talk that matters. And some of this is very good indeed. Mr. Mackenzie's description of a Scottish Utopia is a fine piece of virtuosity, at once entertaining and for the most part convincing. On the subject of the arts to-day he is less easy to bear, and I suspect a certain defensiveness common in writers who, gifted like Mr. Mackenzie with great fluency, have chosen easy and popular paths.

Miss Kay Boyle also chooses, or attempts, easy and popular paths in her new novel. She has a most beautiful prose style, but it is clear that she is writing, in a popular and expressive phrase, with an eye on Hollywood. At times she writes as if she had never had an eye on anything else. Her story is about French resisters in a mountainous part of France. The book begins well; the atmosphere of the mountains is marvellously caught, and there is a gripping sense of the mysterious "movement" in the background, among and beyond the peaks and the folds of the glaciers, never explicitly to be mentioned by the people who feed it and pass messages to it. But the climax will scarcely be believed to be the work of Miss Boyle: the heroine, who has been tied up and marched down the mountain in the dead of night by a Nazi agent, is stranded in a cottage where he is about to shoot her; she is rescued by the mountaineer-hero, Bastineau, who suddenly descends the chimney in the nick of time! A moment later, like a fanfare, the invasion of North Africa is announced. Altogether, it is one of those nights which take an author a long while to live down.

HENRY REED

SHAKESPEARE'S HISTORY

Shakespeare's History Plays. By E. M. W. TILLYARD. London. *Chatto and Windus.* 18s.

This is a baffling book to review. In the first place it is impossible to say how far it has achieved its author's purpose, for no outstanding purpose impresses itself in the reading, and the author's summing up at the end sounds more like an account of where he has got to than a statement of what he set out to reach. It is not even easy to describe the scope of the book. Its formal matter is really the eight plays, in two tetralogies, in which Shakespeare dealt with more or less authentic English historical material. But it prefaces and enlarges this with a compendious erudition which draws in more or less all other "literary productions that helped in some sort to make Shakespeare's History Plays what they are"—some sixty pages on chroniclers, politicians, and political commonplaces known to the Elizabethans, twenty more pages on *A Mirror for Magistrates* and so on. Arrived at Shakespeare, it has fifty pages on the three parts of *Henry VI*, and from twenty to forty pages each on *Richard III*, *Richard II*, *Henry IV* and *Henry V*.

Mr. Tillyard is most illuminating when he discriminates the qualities of the pre-Shakespearean chroniclers; he helps us to see an Elizabethan significance easy to miss in *A Mirror for Magistrates*. But when he comes to Shakespeare, frankly he disappoints. Perhaps the disappointment arises from two sources. First, Mr. Tillyard seems haunted by the ghost of his earlier volume, *The Elizabethan World Picture*, a book in which, with massive erudition, he expounded what he called the cosmic commonplaces of Elizabethan thought, its verbal symbols for its doctrine of the universe. Somehow its comprehensiveness smothered judgment and discrimination. At any time a thousand men may formally accept a hundred articles of faith; but it is the stress exerted by a particular emphasis on any one of these articles, even indeed without change of its phrase, which so often provides the differentiating energy and the new leaven. Secondly, Mr. Tillyard, at heart, regards these plays of Shakespeare as Shakespeare's deliberate deposition of "solemn documents of history, continuing the high tradition of Polydore and Hall." He is little concerned with Shakespeare's creative genius; he recognises, of course, a kind of poetic liturgical genius in him; he never asks the nature of those imaginative and intuitive gifts by which a dramatist makes great drama. And that is really the problem at the heart of Shakespeare's worth: for it is as an artist that he is supreme. Hence the question: Can the artist, by virtue of his own distinctive gifts as artist, give us insight into those political forces which shape the destiny of nations? Shakespeare saw English history as greatly affected by the degree of genius for kingship displayed by its kings; and his dramatic insight into the personality of his kings projects a power by which their England seems visibly to be shaping itself. But this chapter of Shakespeare's political intuition requires a sequel, his profounder sense of the impersonal forces which moulded the Roman empire of Augustus; and Mr. Tillyard does not look at Shakespeare's Roman plays. In short, it is Shakespeare's conscious, overt and more or less explicit doctrine which he seeks.

By seeking and expounding this doctrine, he wants to prove Shakespeare's "massively reflective" capacity, and to provide evidence that he shared the traditional learning of the educated élite of his day. To the political wisdom of this sort of Shakespeare, we are compendiously informed, we owe these principles. The pattern of the eight plays shows that "the troubles of a country are God's punishment for its sins," and particularly for the sin of sedition expressing itself in murder, usurpation, and the consequent neglect of due order in society. An ancestral curse runs through the eight plays, and the second tetralogy displays the working out of God's plan to restore England to prosperity. Outside the tetralogies, *King John* proves to us that "it was better to acquiesce in John's rule, bad though it was, hoping that God would turn the king's heart to good and knowing that the sin of sedition would merely cause God to intensify the punishment, already merited, the country was enduring. . . . By his firmness the Bastard prevents the country from collapsing before the French, and God showed his forgiveness by uniting it very shortly under Henry III."

This may be interesting archæology; but is it profound political wisdom? Is it great historical insight? Is this all that Shakespeare's genius can give us to illumine the political and historical processes of the past? Assuredly not. And if it were, except as a piece of curious erudition, is it worth such laborious documentation?

H. B. CHARLTON

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CELTIC DAYLIGHT

Lovely is the Lee. By ROBERT GIBBINGS. *Dent. 12s. 6d.*

Of course this is enchanted country. The landscape and legend of Ireland have always made a strong appeal to the English, whose own folklore has largely disappeared, and Mr. Robert Gibbings, at home beside—or beneath—any stretch of water, is here on his native ground; the printing and paper are more than tolerable: it would be difficult not to be charmed. But, through the centuries, beside the captivated reader walks a stout dissentient who would none of Ossian ("Sir, a man might write such stuff for ever if he would *abandon* his mind to it"); who could not sit through the *Immortal Hour*, nor tread upon the dreams of the early Yeats. What would be the sturdy fellow's reaction to this book? It is my guess that he would read to the end, grumbling, particularly if he has a map before him (why is there none provided?), at the erratic course of the journey, but held by the very waywardness that he resists.

The effect is calculated enough. You can see from the fine severe wood engravings that there is nothing of the whimsy about Mr. Gibbings. And because he is of the school of Walton rather than of Macpherson, he mingles legend, human wisdom, local and natural history with such niceness of timing that the reader is kept not only from boredom but from disbelief. He likes to show that he has one foot well on the ground, even to the policeman who confides to him that he would give "half his size for an eggshell of brains."

> "You've got them, sir, I could see, the way you were looking at them birds. I looks at them too, and I watches the white light of the morning on their wings and the red light of the evening on their breasts, but what are they to me? Only gulls, gulls, that come in from the ocean to follow the plough. Tell me," he said, "a while ago you were sitting on that bank beyond and you were thinking and thinking. What was it, sir, you were thinking?"
>
> "Was there a girl in a red dress passing along the road?"
>
> "There was that."
>
> "I was thinking hadn't she the neat pair of ankles."
>
> "Wisha, my God, were you thinking that too, the exact same as myself? And all the time I thought 'twas poetry was coursing in your head!"

Poetry courses there, certainly, sometimes finding expression in that kind of hypnotic prose which consists of names alone: "white flowers of strawberry, white flowers of spindlewood, cool blue of speedwell, yellow of cinquefoil; flowers of the blackthorn, catkins of alder." But he can tell a good story and pass on any amount of curious information—about the fidelity of geese, or the burial place of George Moore, or the "Wonderful Battell of Starelings" over Cork in 1621, or the making of the "white stuff" (with a delicate drawing of the still). In the chapters on Galway, where it is unlucky to save a man from drowning as "the sea must have its due," you may read of turf-cutting, of the strange things to be found in bogs, of seaweed gathering on the poverty-stricken western coast, and of monuments whose very names are like the striking of a harp. As for the "Little People," do not expect to avoid them, but they may be met without uneasiness, so homely are their qualities; they show a pretty wit and are full of common sense, like the one who has a word with Taedy Mulcahy's mother when shopping at the fair.

> "'Tis better for you to buy half a dozen more milk bowls," she says, "for the one on the dresser is very awkward for us to be drinking out of when we be a party."

One of the best chapters deals with the people of Cork: "The loveliest city in the world," says Mr. Gibbings wildly, and his description is very charming. The reader, both general and particular, will leave these pleasant waters with regret. The author is much too disarming for criticism, too clever, anyway, to incur it. "Sir," is the most that the cantankerous critic could say, "a man might *read* such stuff. . ."

NAOMI LEWIS

INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY?

Management and Men. By STANLEY WALPOLE. *Cape. 7s. 6d.*

With the end of the war in sight, the future of Joint Production Committees and Works Councils must be decided. How far are we likely to go back to the old division between "employers" and "hands"—as many managements desire which have resented sharing their responsibility with their workers? Not far, if we accept the argument of Mr. Walpole, who until his recent death was the managing director of an engineering firm. In this stimulating book he insists that it is as much in the interests of employers as of the men to preserve and extend the new industrial relations which the war has created. To achieve either stability or efficiency in the difficult years facing British industry, the worker must be made a partner in production.

Whilst the war remained to be won, all except the die-hard industrialists have been prepared to accept the principle of joint management. The existence of a common purpose made this possible. But is there the basis for similar co-operation in the future? Mr. Walpole suggests that it is to be found if we

> substitute for the old generalised distinction between "Management" and "Labour," a more specific and logical distinction based on *the actual function of the individual.*

What exactly is meant by this abstract proposition is never made very clear: to judge from the general tenor of the book, however, it seems to imply a shift in the loyalty of individual employees from their own class or caste to the interests of their firm as a whole. To achieve this, joint consultation is essential, not merely at the factory level, but nationally. Mr. Walpole illustrates his thesis with the example of his own Works Council, where, he claims, the members of the committee speak and vote according to their personal inclinations, and not merely as employers and workers: class harmony and high output result. He feels that it is possible to arrive at a similar happy state wherever the same approach is tried. To complement this new relationship in the factories, an overhaul of the existing national structure is essential. Although Mr. Walpole praises the T.U.C., he has harsh words for the "disorganised rabble" of his fellow-employers who are not even able to form a single representative association. He would like to set up an entirely new National Industrial Council, in which the trade unions would participate on equal terms. From District Councils, through Regions, its members would be indirectly elected, and would possess advisory, not executive, powers. In particular factories the Works Council would be responsible to the Board; nationally to Parliament.

As a blue-print, Mr. Walpole's scheme has its attractions. But is it practicable—or even realistic—in a capitalist society? Quite apart from the psychological problem of persuading either workers or managements which have spent years struggling against each other that industrial disputes are unprofitable to both, there are very serious arguments against this corporate structure of industry. Is the assumption that a common purpose can be created likely to appeal to trade-unionists while ultimate control still resides in a Board of Directors whose main purpose must

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be to show a profit to their shareholders? Mr. Walpole tells us, contrary to experience, that full employment is as much the aim of management as prosperity of a particular firm. But is there much evidence of this? Under his scheme, the workers' part in the Factory Council is to be confined to discussion of wages and working conditions. Such questions as the acceptance of contracts—on which some shop stewards already have a voice—are to be excluded from the agenda of Works Councils.

What Mr. Walpole fails to see, when he argues that matters of industrial structure are purely economic and have no connection with political problems, is that his system could not possibly function with the workers having a strictly limited and controlled interest in the purposes for which the industry is conducted. Whether or not the workers have a say in these questions immediately raises the political issue of social or private control, which Mr. Walpole regards as irrelevant. In fact, he does not appreciate the political implications of the problems with which he is dealing. If much of the enlightened phraseology is stripped from Mr. Walpole's proposals, how much more do they amount to than the present state of things in the better factories?

JEANNE MORLEY

CALLING EUROPE

The "Man in the Street" (of the B.B.C.) Talks to Europe. *King and Staples.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

It was not that he spoke with notable eloquence, or that he had a novel or particularly arresting message to convey; the running commentary on the march of events broadcast several times a week in the B.B.C.'s European Service by the "Man in the Street" during the period 1941–44 took the form, appropriate to the speaker's pseudonym, of simple, informal "both feet on the ground" talks. What he said was unofficial: it was not the voice of the Foreign Office. Nor did the commentator, I fancy, think of himself, in this capacity, as playing a part in political warfare. Yet these talks, round which was gradually built an enormous audience—Allied, enemy and neutral—were probably the nearest thing evolved in this war to the Fourteen Points. As a moral weapon their influence far surpassed that of the Atlantic Charter's fleshless generalities. Listeners heard and acclaimed in these broadcasts the voice of sanity, steady in the days of defeats, sober in the hours when the approach of victory could be discerned.

> Our first duty will be to guarantee to the rising generation of Germans that we shall not again fail to destroy the influences which have dragged humanity into two world wars and will drag us into a third if they get the chance; and our next duty will be to guarantee economic, political and social conditions throughout Europe which will ensure that the young people who learn to love all that is liberal and humanistic will not have their hearts broken by cynics and reactionaries, as they were broken in Britain and France, no less than in Germany and everywhere else in Europe, after the last war. *June* 6, 1943.

Whether he was affirming the determination of the common people of Britain to fight on until complete victory had been won, contrasting the principles and practice of National Socialism with the aims of democracy, or voicing the belief that Britain and the U.S.S.R. would co-operate fully after the war in rebuilding a European economy within whose framework the problem of Germany might find its solution—the "Man in the Street" typified essentially that quality of decency, allied with shrewd, homespun common sense, which Europe, liberated or conquered, still hopes to find in the British attitude towards the post-war settlement.

Another disillusionment may lie in store for European optimists. These were "unofficial" broadcasts; and Britain to-day is a very tired country. But of one thing I am sure: whatever Mr. Eden may have thought, countless listeners abroad imagined that they were hearing, on a Government-controlled radio, the authentic expression of British war aims. The "experiment in high-mindedness" for which this sturdy humanist stood may not be written into the peace treaties; but no British Government can quite disavow the obligations to which the "Man in the Street," for all his unofficial anonymity, in fact committed us.

AYLMER VALLANCE

THE SOLICITOR

Confessions of an Un-common Attorney. By REGINALD L. HINE, F.S.A. *Dent.* 15*s.*

Unlike barristers, solicitors do not usually write autobiography. Perhaps they are supposed to be strong, silent men. The late Sir John Hollams did, but the work was not exhilarating. Mr. Hine, however, is as "uncommon" as he professes to be. He is an author and an antiquary enjoying the comparative leisure of a country practice and the run of all his firm's deeds ranging from 1591.

Only about one-third of the book is concerned with law. The rest ranges over antiquaries, parsons, schoolmasters, and literary topics. The author's remarks on funerals and wills are certainly up to date, for he has much to say on cremation and the unfortunate misadventures of a party who went out to bury ashes at sea and had all the ashes flung back in their faces by a gust of wind. He defends the old custom of reading a will to friends and family; but it should be read before the body is laid in the grave. I can suggest a still better solution, based on the funeral address given to the mourners by the late Mr. Henry Salt on a gramophone record, just before his coffin went into the oven. The testator could make a similar record of his will, which could then be turned on for recitation at the funeral.

Running through the book there is a fine collection of anecdotes. I have heard a great many anecdotes (especially of the law) in the course of my life; but these are all fresh to me. There is an amazing number of extraordinary surnames recorded on page 76, which is only matched by the Christian names in the following paragraph.

The author takes a rather detached view of schoolmasters, about whom he might have quoted the story of the man in the Arabian Nights who was told under pain of death to find the best story in the world and only discovered it by pledging himself never to repeat it to a fool, an infidel, or a schoolmaster. With schoolmasters he couples parsons, and there is a pleasant sketch of Dean Farrar at Canterbury. He mentions a Methodist preacher who always took his dog into the pulpit. It was said that the dog was a keen theologian and would disagree with certain doctrines preached by his master. Sometimes it would end in a duet by the preacher and the dog until the preacher would fling open the pulpit door and expel the animal from the chapel.

Mr. Hine's reflections on religion are rather vague compared with his opinions on other points; but he records a prayer composed by Mr. John Ward, M.P., in 1727, which is well worth preserving:

> O Lord, Thou knowest that I have nine houses in the city of London, and that I have lately purchased an estate in fee simple in Essex. I beseech Thee to preserve the two counties of Middlesex and Essex from fires and earthquakes. And, as I have also a mortgage in Hertfordshire, I beg Thee also to have an eye of compassion on

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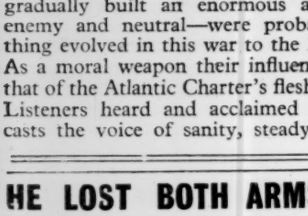

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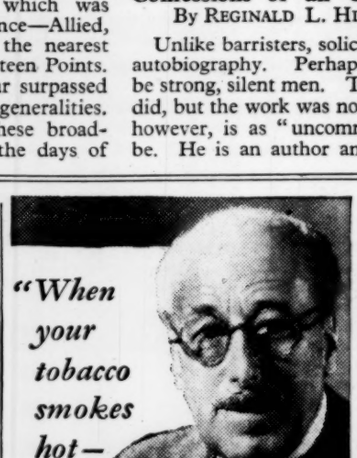

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Company Meeting

F. W. WOOLWORTH & CO.

MR. W. L. STEPHENSON'S STATEMENT

THE 36th annual general meeting of F. W. Woolworth and Co., Ltd., will be held on February 23 in London.

The following is an extract from the statement of the chairman, Mr. W. L. STEPHENSON, circulated with the report and accounts for the year ended December 31, 1944:—

The first thing to note with satisfaction is that some recovery was made in 1944 over the results of 1943. The increased profit over that year is £665,991, an improvement of 12.80 per cent. We can accept this as a happy augury. We should, however, at the same time realise we are a long way from complete recovery, and our present figure of £5,869,645 compared with the first full war year of £7,958,159 net profit provides a true picture, but we can be thankful that we have halted the downward trend.

Last year, when the earnings of the undertaking declined, you accepted a reduced dividend, thus preserving the general reserve of surplus to be carried forward. It is now proposed that a final dividend of 1s. 9d. per unit shall be paid, making (with the interim of 6d.) a total dividend of 2s. 3d. per unit for the year 1944, as against 2s. for the previous year. This can be done without adversely affecting the carry forward, which at £7,395,182 is increased by £162,342. The board has also appropriated a substantial sum to the reserve for future taxation.

Conservation of resources is a tradition of your company. The stockholders have invariably, without, so far as I know, a single demur, agreed with our practice of building up the stability of the company. Even in years of decreasing profits no less than £924,065 has been added to the surplus since 1939 and a still greater sum to specific reserves. The present dividend ratio, based on the nominal Ordinary unit price of 5s., is misleading as it does not take into account the full value of the assets employed in the business. These are partly covered by the surplus and reserves carried forward, which now stand at a figure largely in excess of the Ordinary stock.

FUTURE TRENDS

As to the future trend of trade, one guess is as good as another. A great deal depends on Government policy. There has been much said recently about the urgency of placing ourselves in a position to export our manufactured goods just as soon as we can turn from war to peace. I venture the humble opinion that these exports of manufactured articles will not eventuate if our home market is withheld, by restriction from our manufacturers. Ability to produce goods of quality and price such as will win export markets for us will depend largely on gearing ourselves to wholesome production for home consumption.

We shall all have to work hard and skilfully if we are to face competition, and I cannot see any better way of winning export trade than predicating it on our own home market. A manufacturer who has machined up to do a good mass production job for this market is the one who can take on export business. This policy must result in more economic production and regularised employment with corresponding benefit to your company and the retail trade in general.

Finally, I would express sincere appreciation of the loyalty and support received during the past year from the staff, especially those of our people who have helped to carry on the company's business in London and Southern England so courageously and under such trying and, at times, dangerous conditions.

that county, and for the rest of the counties Thou mayest deal with them as Thou art pleased. O Lord, enable the Banks to answer all their bills, and make all debtors good men. Give prosperous voyage and safe return to the Mermaid sloop because I have not insured it. And because Thou hast said: "The days of the wicked are but short," I trust that Thou will not forget Thy promise, as I have an estate in reversion on the death of the profligate young man, Sir J. L——. Keep my friends from sinking, preserve me from thieves and housebreakers, and make all my servants so honest and faithful that they may always attend to my interests, and never cheat me out of my property night or day.

E. S. P. HAYNES

Week-end Competition

No. 785

Set by W. R.

"In her daydreams at the Vicarage the unsophisticated Jane Austen must have imagined herself as the heroine of her novel *Emma*"—this innocent remark by a dramatic critic in the *Evening Standard* would amuse Miss Austen in the Elysian Fields. Competitors are invited to provide her comments, in not more than 200 words. Entries by February 26th.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 782

Set by John Lilburne

I have often wondered what Caligula's horse thought of his master. Competitors are invited to submit a 200-word opinion of their master or mistress by the pet of any prominent figure in literature or history. Obvious examples, of course, are St. Jerome's lion and Bruce's spider.

Report by John Lilburne

The main conclusion I draw from the host of entries is that most people believe that their pets dislike them. Where this isn't the case, the most patronising attitudes are ascribed to rats, dogs, lions, sparrows, serpents, and heraldic unicorns. The animal world, obviously, is a much more genteel and moral place. Lesbia seems to have shocked the two sparrows who wrote to me, Cowper's hare pitied his madness, the satanic serpent reproached Eve for sinning. Dr. Johnson, on the other hand, had a multitude of faithful Hodges who rushed in to vindicate his memory, but, like Boswell, they were too busy making notes of his epigrams to have strong views on his character. Still, a man who insists that his cat shall have its oysters is worth his place in history. W. H. G. Price sent a novel explanation of the loyalty of Mary's lamb. Confronted with the prospect of butchering, it rose above sheepish acquiescence, attached itself to the farmer's repulsive daughter, and afterwards never could make up its mind whether the escape was worth the cost. S. A. Cooper sent a brilliant account in the Doric of Bruce's encounter with the spider, which, even with his glossary, made difficult reading for the Sassenach. The same is true of Caligula's horse who chose to express himself in classical Latin. William Bliss protested against the fate of emblematic lions and R. J. P. Hewison provided a charming explanation of the fate of yet another of Cowper's pets, Selima. I think E. W. Fordham's sketch of G. K. Chesterton gave the best impression of man and animal and merits a first prize of two guineas. A guinea each to William Stewart—who debunks one of my favourite childhood stories—and Caroline Ramsden, whose account of the woes of Marengo caught my sympathy.

QUOODLE ON G. K. C.

Long ago I wrote a song. It was about men and myself and my fellows. Sometimes I wish I hadn't written it. I'll tell you why. Although it is true about us and our noses, and very true about most men, it is not true about G. K. He knew, if no other man did, the brilliant smell of water, and the scent of scentless flowers: even the smell of Sunday morning God gave him as well as us.

I used to follow him as he rolled along making passes with his sword-stick at imaginary highwaymen or company promoters. "Quoodle," he would say, with his gurgling laugh, "I have disembowelled him. It is precisely because he isn't here that I do it so effectively. You chase rabbits in your sleep; I disembowel imaginary highwaymen when I am awake. We are both profoundly right. The real rabbit will escape down a hole. The real highwayman could not miss so monstrous a target as I. Dreams are real, Quoodle, only facts are fictitious—but some day you may catch your rabbit, and I may slay Apollyon."

I did not always understand him, but I loved him because he loved almost everything.

E. W. FORDHAM

GELERT'S OPINION OF PRINCE LLEWELLYN

I wass a Welsh dog, look you. I could make allowances for the Welsh temperament. It iss impulsive. Inteet to gootness, yess! My master, Prince Llewellyn, wass often impulsive with a whip or a bit of stick. But, Mr. Lilburne, bach, it iss one thing to be impulsive with sticks and whips, and it iss quite another thing to stick spears into persons for doing their duty, whatever! Intelligent I wass, but I wass also a fool to save the child of such a master. I haf peen a long time dead, Mr. Lilburne, bach, but my hair bristles yet when I think of the loyalty I wasted on that rash and prainless puddinghead! Look you, if the Prince had had as much prains as a three-day puppy, he would haf known a dog of my intelligence would not kill his son and then wait like a fool for the father, all ploody! So I spit on his memorial, and I say: To Hell with the Beddgelert Legend! If I had my life over again, now, I would help the wolf to devour the little poy, Duw anwyl dad!

WILLIAM STEWART

MARENGO

If I saw my master falling
From his hard-won rank and state
To a less exalted calling,
I would welcome such a fate.

If he'd only quit re-arming;
Fighting Englishmen in Spain;
Turn his mind to dairy farming,
On some sunny, southern plain.

If he'd scrap the pomp and bunting,
Let the gilded eagles go;
We might have a season's hunting,
In the shires (incognito).

Utter lack of moderation
Is my master's greatest curse:
How can one man or one nation
Dominate the universe?

'Mid the snow and ice of Russia,
Leaving Moscow far behind;
There and back, from France to Prussia,
Thoughts like these have filled my mind.

Please don't think that I'm complaining;
With my master I'm content;
But I do detest campaigning
Up and down the Continent.

So, where e're you honest men go
In the town or country fair;
Spare a thought for poor "Marengo,"
Sadly roaming here and there.

Seeking but to quit the babel,
For the land where he was born,
Longing for a sheltered stable,
And a meal of mellow corn.

Sensing ultimate disaster,
Filled with one supreme desire,
That his well-loved lord and master
Shed ambition, and retire.

CAROLINE RAMSDEN

Personal

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